

RATHER LIKE

By Jules Castier

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RATHER LIKE....

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RATHER LIKE...

SOME ENDEAVOURS TO
ASSUME THE MANTLES
OF THE GREAT BY
JULES CASTIER.

WITH A
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

EMBODYING THE
OPINIONS OF
THE GREAT

PHILADELPHIA
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

When M. Castier's manuscript was introduced to me as the work of one writing in an alien tongue, and furthermore with the avowed object of parodying the most famous British writers of the day, I confess I was not enthusiastic. A glance at a page here and there, however, aroused my interest, and later I read it with keen enjoyment.

Having dealt with the rapacities of M. Castier's literary representatives, I felt that such an unusual book should be introduced to the public in a somewhat different manner from that usually adopted. I therefore determined to send a proof of each parody to the author parodied. This I did with the following letter.

"I am approaching you on rather an unusual subject. Some time ago I had submitted to me, as the work of a young Frenchman, a series of parodies on the work of leading English writers, which had been written whilst he was a prisoner in Germany. They were so remarkable that I became keenly interested, with the result that I accepted the book for publication.

"What I should like to do is to publish in a foreword the opinions of the authors who have been parodied, and to this end I am sending you a set of proofs of the parody of your own work.

“ When I tell you that not so much as a comma has been altered since the manuscript left the author's hands, you will appreciate how remarkable it is that a Frenchman should be able to write so in an alien tongue.

“ I may add that nearly all the principal writers of the day are included in the volume. If you can find time to express your opinion I shall be greatly obliged.”

The answers I give below in their alphabetical order.

F. ANSTEY : “ To be parodied is for an author the highest of compliments and one which I have never previously received. So I have read ‘ An Officer's Gefangenenerlager ’ with much interest and pleasure and am greatly impressed by its French author's perfect command of the English language. If my age had permitted and it had been my fate to be an officer-prisoner in a German Camp, I can only hope that I should have been able to describe the surroundings with as much humour and effect as my parodist. But I doubt it.”

G. K. CHESTERTON : “ It is certainly an excellent imitation of my writing ; and probably greatly preferable to the original. I certainly think it a notable achievement even for the most sympathetic foreigner ; to write a good translation of what a man did say involves being a man of letters in two languages ; but to write a good travesty of what he might say is a much more remarkable thing ; and I for one would rather read the travesty than the translation.”

JOHN GALSWORTHY : “ I liked the wooden spaniel, and was so glad when he fell and killed the

Frenchman. But what a pity he didn't fall in the third sentence and kill the parody. They are, surely, not so easy to make as all that."

CHARLES GARVICE: "The pitfall into which most parodists are so apt to fall, is that of over-exaggeration; too frequently they seize on an obvious fault or weakness of the writer whose work they are burlesquing, and harp upon it unduly; in short, they are in danger of missing the spirit of their author in their efforts to belabour, with their jester's bladder, the superficial defects of his workmanship. Our parodist avoids this common error and, penetrating below the surface of his victim's style and mental processes, parodies with a subtlety which is all the more remarkable, seeing that it is displayed by a foreigner, to whom the tortuous peculiarities of our exasperatingly rich language should be almost incomprehensible. If I may say so, I consider that he has been more merciful to me than I deserve. If I were parodying my own work, I am sure I could easily be more cruel than my imitator has been; this, no doubt, accounts for my appreciation and enjoyment of the skit. I can chuckle over the description 'bairns' and 'colleens,' as applied to Devonshire children; of course, the words are never used in that county: I can smile at the grammatical distortions, the split infinitives, the divided verbs, while I ask myself, in fear and trembling, whether I have ever been guilty of so vapid and uninteresting a story as that which our jester has attributed to me. Anyway, I have come to the conclusion that the clever parodist, such as we have here, is not only an amusing artist, but an extremely useful one, and that his subject, though he may writhe under the strokes of the bladder, may be

roused to a sense of his many weaknesses and to a determination to do better work in the future.

MAURICE HEWLETT : " It is a long time since I did the sort of thing parodied by your client, and I fear that I have lost touch with it as well as savour. To be perfectly honest I don't think he has got me, though it is no doubt remarkable that he should do it at all. Evidently he can write English idiom ; but there is a gulf fixed between writing like Englishmen and writing like a particular Englishman."

ROBERT HICHENS : " I have read ' The Blood of the Call ' and been very much entertained by it. It is astonishing that a Frenchman could have written it. He has been specially skilful in avoiding all gross caricature. The end is delightfully absurd and surprising. I hope he will have a great success with his book."

E. W. HORNUNG : " A parody with a punch : full of shrewd digs and condign chaff."

JEROME K. JEROME : " It is so long ago that I wrote anything of this character that I hardly feel myself to be a judge of the merit. I have the feeling that I am looking at some strange drawing of myself as a child. I hope you will understand."

W. W. JACOBS : " I have read the ' Yellow Pipe ' with much interest. If it is the unaided work of a Frenchman, ' remarkable ' is the only word to apply to it."

W. J. LOCKE : " I am as much amused by the shrewd way in which another has seen me as pleased by the parodist's delicate irony."

LEONARD MERRICK : " If I did not know that I had never seen ' The Defence of Art ' before the publishers sent me a proof, I should think that I had written some of it. I should be a proud man if I could mimic the style of any French author in any of his contes half as brilliantly as M. Castier has mimicked mine in my ' Tricotrin ' tales. But the style of my ' Tricotrin ' tales is designedly French, and M. Castier is a Frenchman—I wish he had been moved to imitate my stories of English life, instead ; I wish I needn't wait till the book is published to read all the other imitations in it. ' The Defence of Art ' makes me intensely curious. M. Castier is bilinguous to an extent that takes one's breath away. Some seven or eight years ago, a volume of French verse, captivating and delicious, reached me from a young poet who was a stranger to me ; and the lengthy inscription, in which the name of Tricotrin figured very agreeably, was written in such supple English that I stared at it, astonished. This was the first time I had met with any of M. Castier's work. M. Castier himself I have never met yet. I learn that, since those days, he has fought and suffered, and been a prisoner in Germany. I am happy that he still lives. Recalling the qualities of the poems that he sent to me, I think he will do work that will live, too."

EDEN PHILLPOTTS : " Excellently done and quite wonderful I think. You should have a very entertaining piece of work and may its success rejoice the amazing author and yourself."

WILLIAM LE QUEUX : " I have read a number of travesties upon my plots and literary style, but the story ' The Purple Praline ' is of outstanding cleverness. ' I am, alas ! only too well aware of my

own faults and idiosyncracies which I trust the public will forgive. Being, like the writer, of French birth, my hope always is that my critics will overlook my oftentimes inferior English. My 'style' has often been derided, I know. The fact is that my younger years were spent in speaking foreign languages. In the sensational story the plot and its development are the chief points if one wishes—as I always do—to keep the reader interested until the words 'The End.' For my slips in English grammar I apologise—but I cannot help it. I have admired the story 'The Purple Praline' and have laughed heartily over it. My caricaturist, who is no doubt a genius, has exactly hit off the cosmopolitanism inherent in my work in the characters of the Cavaliere Rabbitskini—who, I suppose, wears rabbit skin upon the collar of his coat, which so many men in Italy wear in winter—Nadejda Rubbishska of 'the bejewelled hand'—the name sounds like that of a street in Petrograd—and of the haughty Piotr Piklovitch Swaggeroff—half-brother, most probably to the Baron Twobobski of a popular revue. And here I may venture to betray a secret. My secretary, who has for years read and typed all that I have written, and who had in her hands the proofs of 'The Purple Praline' before I did, passed it across to me with the remark: 'This is exactly like your work! It's wonderful!' I read it, and agreed with her. Though many skits upon my books have been published in English, French, Italian, and German by authors of those nationalities 'The Purple Praline' is the cleverest and most humorous of them all."

G. BERNARD SHAW: This is by miles the most accurate parody of me I have ever seen, and the only one that has not completely missed the point of my

rather tortured stage directions, in which my first rule is to say nothing that could remind the reader that what is being described is a stage and not a real place."

E. TEMPLE THURSTON : " I was interested to receive the proofs of your French author's parody of my work and assume that in asking for an opinion you cannot expect it will be unbiassed and do not require it to be anything but honest. For work then of a Frenchman writing in a language other than his own, it seems to me a very creditable performance indeed, I only wish I could write as well in French. Parody however seems to be an erroneous description of it, as it seems somewhat lacking in wit which I hold to be part of the essence of the spirit of parody."

H. A. VACHELL : " I have read the parody with great interest and much amusement. It's first rate. If the others are up to sample, I congratulate you on finding a winner. It is amazing that any foreigner should handle our language so well and naturally. Let me know the title, please, of the book when it appears, as I should like to have a copy. Oddly enough, ' The Skipper ' was the nickname of one of the best-known house-masters at Harrow in my time, old Holmes. Probably your young Frenchman doesn't know this, or he would have turned it to account."

H. G. WELLS : " No fear."

C. N. WILLIAMSON : " The proofs of the amusing parody on ' The Lightning Conductor ' and ' The Motor Maid ' have just been forwarded from France. We both think the parody quite good, and much more like us than we should ever dare to try and be like ourselves ! Thank you for sending the proofs, which I return at once, as I fear the forwarding has caused

delay. Is not the clever French author of the parodies doing his readers a bad turn in telling them to look for scenery in Baedeker or Joanne? *We* could never find any there, or in any other guide-book, unless you can call 'castle on right; mountain on left' scenic descriptions. Personally, I think for scenery he'd better send them to our books!"

HERBERT JENKINS.

FOREWORD

ON December 2nd, 1914, I had the misfortune to be captured by the Germans in Alsace, and remained a prisoner till after the Armistice was signed. After a few uneventful months at Heidelberg, I came into collision with the authorities, and remained so till the end, passing through a series of imprisonments, court-martials, more imprisonments, reprisals and the like : I was even tried once (and sentenced) for high treason. My greatest solace lay in reading—whenever I was allowed books ; and I hit upon the idea of attempting to parody some of the authors for amusement's sake. When next in a period of comparative liberty, I read some of my stuff to some English comrades, who were kind enough to express their satisfaction, and to advise me to seek publication—which I did.

My publisher tells me I should explain this (which I do *à mon corps défendant*), also that I am a Frenchman, and that not so much as a comma in my M.S. has been altered since it left my hands. He no doubt has his own very good reasons for imposing upon me the irksome task of endeavouring to explain

FOREWORD

myself. For this explanation and for the parodies themselves, I beg to tender my apologies to all concerned.

J. C.

PARIS,

July, 1919.

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RATHER LIKE. . . .

LEONARD MERRICK

THE DEFENCE OF ART

TRICOTRIN, the celebrated poet, whose verses every publisher in Paris had rejected scores of times, felt moody and irritable as he climbed up the familiar stairs to his garret in the Rue des Trois-Frères. And yet, extraordinary as it may appear, his anger was not due to his being out of funds: had he not just partaken of a luxurious dinner at the "Faisan d'Or," the splendid one franc fifty dinner that makes half Montmartre's mouth water? Why, had he not the tremendous sum of eighteen francs thirty in his bulging trousers pocket?—the remains of a brand-new louis he had changed at the aforesaid "Faisan d'Or"—of course, he knew how to live, is it not; he had flicked the delighted garçon the royal pourboire of twenty centimes. . . . No, his anger was not due to want of funds, any more than to amorous depression: had not Joséphine, the new girl behind the counter of

Madame Estelle's, the fashionable modiste in the Rue Lepic, smiled caressingly on him that very afternoon?

Yet it is a fact that he felt cross; it is a fact that he viciously kicked open the door of the little room he shared with Pitou, the no less famed composer; and that he flung himself on to his bed, at the immediate peril of a complete collapse of that useful article of furniture, which lacked a couple of legs, and was only kept in its proper position by means of a pile of odd manuscripts (de Fronsac was wont to declare that these manuscripts were nothing but the "declined with thanks" slips which Tricotrin reaped at random from all possible publishing places).

"My old one," said Pitou, "mind the furniture! And kindly avoid disturbing me just now: I have hit upon a fine motif for my Blue Symphony. It will make all Paris flock to Colonne's!"

"I fish myself of your symphony!" dejectedly replied the poet. "It may well go hang, for all I care—yes, and the whole of Paris may go hang with it!"

"What have you?" The composer's query was full of wonder. "You are not hungry—you told me you had a louis. I have never known you have the toothache; and you don't look like a man with the toothache. Is it—is it your uncle from Lyons?"

"No, it is not my uncle from Lyons," moaned Tricotrin, slowly moving into a sitting posture. "It is that confounded pig of Delorme."

"Delorme, the editor of *La Gazette*?" broke in Pitou, hardly believing his ears.

"Himself."

"My friend, I must compliment you on your connections! Why, I myself would not dare even to submit my Sunshine Nocturne to Delorme!"

"Of course, you fool, *La Gazette* doesn't publish music! But Delorme is the most heartless camel I ever came across."

"What did he do? Reject a poem?"

"If that were all, I shouldn't be so angry about him," petulantly replied Tricotrin. "No, he actually played a fool's joke on me—he offered himself my head—the cow!"

"Tell me all," begged the composer; "your cruel story may inspire me with a heartrending end for my new opera."

Thus adjured, Tricotrin related his misadventure:

"Imagine to yourself, my friend, that this very morning, after you had gone out, a messenger boy brought me a *petit bleu* from the great Delorme himself! I could hardly believe my own eyes—but there was the blue envelope, and inside it, staring me in the face, the yellow note-paper with the heading of *La Gazette*! Yes, my friend, the editor—the pig—did me the honour of begging me to call upon him at three o'clock in the afternoon—he would then be happy to give me some information concerning my poem, "The Deathless Motor-Car," in fifteen cantos, which I had been kind enough to submit to *La Gazette* . . . Yes, I had sent them my "Deathless Motor-Car"; it had been declined by all the so-called 'literary' periodicals—more fools they!—and I had to send it somewhere. . . . Well, here I was then, this morning, my old one, on the verge of celebrity. My verse was going to appear in the largest Paris halfpenny paper! Picture to yourself my triumph! I was great, I was renowned!"

"Go on," growled Pitou, "I want to hear the end!"

"Well, naturally I called at the *Gazette* offices—you know, near that temple of pecuniary gods, the

Bourse. Equally naturally, I had dressed as smartly as a poet should be dressed: I had Lajeunie's topper, Flamant's gloves, and Sanquereau's black tie. . . . Verlaine himself could not have looked more artistic than I, when I was ushered into Delorme's private office. . . . It was marked private on the door, at any rate, although there were about half a dozen other men lounging round Delorme's desk. . . . Imagine my joy, my dear one, when I recognised these men as the editors of important papers. Yes, there was Lempereur, of the *Français*, and Saulanne, of *Le Demi-Mot*, and Dulac, of *La Folie Parisienne*—and two or three equally chic! My friend, I felt my fortune was made. . . . Here is my friend Delorme, thought I, who wishes to set a crown upon my budding reputation, by introducing me to his colleagues—I am to enjoy a sort of Roman triumph before. . . .”

“Never mind the triumph,” heartlessly broke in the composer, “come on to the fall.”

“My friend, I did fall—I fell from high! . . . Delorme rose and picked up a large foolscap manuscript from his desk—my ‘Deathless Motor-Car!’ He walked across to the other editors, and just as I was already hearing his words of praise in my mind’s ears, he suddenly burst out: ‘Yes, that’s the fool, gentlemen, who dares waste some of my time, with his rhymed trash.’ . . . He actually said *rhymed trash*, the brute! . . . ‘I wished you to see him for yourself, so that you might all know M. Gustave Tricotrin for the future, and be ready, if necessary, to place his productions in their only proper sphere.’ . . . And he had the ‘culot’ to chuck my poem into his waste-paper basket—the beast! The others laughed—the pigs! Oh, my friend, how sad I felt—how I pitied these brutes who could not be stirred by the immortal

beauties of my verses! . . . Still, I did not break down—no, Gustave Tricotrin knows how to be strong in the hour of need; I snatched my stanzas from their ignoble resting-place, flung these camels a scathing glance, and marched out of the house without honouring them with a single word. My silence was more eloquent than their abuse: my friend, I felt as a lion-tamer leaving a cage of wild beasts! . . . But when I was outside, sadness began to fall upon me: my dream was gone, my prospects ruined, my triumph—exploded! I wandered wearily through some streets—but nothing can console me—neither the bustle and life of the city, nor the calm of Montmartre, nor the wiles of Joséphine, nor the wine of ‘Le Faisan d’Or.’ . . . My friend, I thirst for revenge—I will and shall pay out that pig of Delorme! Not till then will I be able to write another verse!”

After this outburst, the young poet heaved a deep sigh, and fell back at full length on the bed, thereby causing a three-legged bottomless chair to fall with a clatter that would no doubt have made an excellent thunder effect at the little Théâtre Montmartre close by, but which the luckless composer found fatal to the inspiration of his symphony. Indeed, all thought of his own art had by now left Pitou, who began to smart at the slight done to Art in general, in the person of his unhappy friend. Are not all artists brothers? A poet, a composer—he who insults the one does an injury to the other, and it is fitting that he should be subject to their united wrath. . . .

“Say then,” muttered Pitou, after a heavy silence, “if Goujaud and I were to call upon this pig of an editor, and to make a suitable appointment for a meeting at the Parc des Princes? Goujaud has a pair of swords, and he would. . . .”

"No," listlessly muttered the poet, "I do not commit myself with merchants! He is but a vendor of blackened paper—I am an immortal singer: my dear one, a god may not thrash a clown!"

"And yet," muttered Pitou, "a god condescended to thrash a composer; did not a certain Apollo . . ."

"My old one, you do him too great an honour by comparing him to Marsyas. Marsyas could sing—he can but croak. . . Besides, *he* has not only made me angry, he has offered himself my head. . . Therefore, there is but one thing for me to do: to offer myself his!"

"Good!" exclaimed the composer, "but how?"

The two young men sat up late that night, discussing the weighty problem. By a stroke of good luck, Pitou discovered a bottle under his bed—a bottle of "Bourgogne Supérieur," not quite empty, a relic, no doubt, of the marriage banquet of little Lisette and Touquet, the costumier at the corner of the Rue des Martyrs. The bottle had cost as much as one franc twenty—perhaps even more—and the liquid ruby seemed to set Tricotrin's head afire. When he did retire to rest at last the moodiness had completely left him, and Pitou was as joyful as when he had composed his immortal comic song, "Partant pour le Moulin," for that fickle goddess Paulette Fleury. . . . Had they not their plan, the subtle plan by which they would fool the great Delorme, and show him that a vile merchant may not in vain deride Art and her noble priests? Ha! He had dared publicly to raise a laugh at Tricotrin? Well, now Tricotrin and Pitou were going to get all Paris to laugh at him, Delorme—the pig!

. . . It was just at that time—some days later, to be quite correct—that some of the Paris papers began

to publish eulogies of the great Republican, Arsène Lepeltier, the centenary of whose birth it was fitting to celebrate next month. Naturally, *La Gazette* took up the whole thing as these celebrations deserve to be taken up—in fact, *La Gazette* was the first paper to dwell upon the merits of the late Arsène Lepeltier, Gambetta's friend, one of the promoters of the Republic, one of its most distinguished orators and statesmen, one of France's most brilliant sons, the man who. . . etc., etc. The columns of *La Gazette* were full of information about the great Arsène Lepeltier, and the minor papers, needless to say, largely preyed upon their larger brothers, so that, within very few days, all Paris was talking of the projected centenary celebration—why, even of the statue by none less than Rodin, which was to bear testimony throughout eternity to the virtues of the deceased. . . Of course, Arsène Lepeltier is not a name that was present to everybody's mind; but then, no more are Jules Ferry, or Ferdinand Fabre, or Scheurer-Kestner, or many more, who all have their statues amid the majestic Tuileries, or the shady Luxembourg, and round whom, now, a little Jacqueline is playing at puss-in-the-corner, or a tiny citizen-to-be is spinning a top, all in blissful ignorance of the great shadow that looms above them. Anyhow, it is a fact that all Paris was talking of Arsène Lepeltier and his manifold virtues, and that the Government, at the urgent appeal of *La Gazette*, had promised to consider the erection of the memorial in the Cour Carrée of the Louvre—quite near those of two other apostles of political liberty: Gambetta and Lafayette.

And then, just when Arsène Lepeltier's popularity was its at highest, the unforeseen occurred. . . . A tiny little literary review, "L'Ombre de la Butte," practically unknown till then, published a long article

by Lajeunie, the novelist, in which certain editors of leading "dailies" were advised to look up their information in the Larousse—especially biographical information—in order to avoid possible mistakes, or even (it was hinted) hoaxes on a large scale. It began to dawn upon some Parisians (perhaps those who, at the instigation of some friend or other, had met one night at the Lune Rousse or the Quat'-z-Arts, and read the article in *L'Ombre de la Butte*) that they had, indeed, never heard of Arsène Lepeltier or of his career. A few were dismayed to discover, upon careful investigation, that the omniscient Larousse, as well as the *Grande Encyclopédie*, shared their ignorance on this head.

The thing was talked of; it began to spread, down the Rue des Martyrs and the Rue Pigalle, to the Opera, right down to the Bourse, all along the Boulevards, across the Seine, even. . . . The Quartier Latin laughed loudest, of course: from the *Soufflet* to *Lipp's*, at Saint-Germain-des-Prés—from the Place Saint-Michel to the Gare Montparnasse, everybody chuckled, grinned, or burst out laughing. Then a biting—and witty—dirge appeared in *L'Ombre de la Butte* above the name of Gustave Tricotrin—and some editors swore, and some bullied their clerks, but Delorme raged, because he himself, in *La Gazette*, had started the whole Arsène Lepeltier business, on advice received. . . . How the devil had he received it? . . . Why, yes, now he remembered. . . . It was the day after he had had his roaring joke on that fool who called himself a poet, Tricotrin—the very day after. . . . What if . . . ? No, impossible! . . . And yet. . .

It will perhaps be best to let Pitou himself explain the operation of the grand plan which, after all, did

no great harm, and was the means of—but you shall see what it was the means of!

“Yes, my old one,” said Pitou some time after, to one of his colleagues in Art, “the whole idea was worthy of us: when we went to bed that night, we had resolved upon a triumphal revenge, the likes of which Paris had never seen. . . . Who thought of it?—My dear one, I credited you with enough sense to find *that* out by yourself—and besides, my well-known modesty prevents my answering that question . . . I hope I make myself understood? . . . Well, the next day I went to see my old copain de Fronsac . . . Yes, he was rather sore against me after . . . a trick? No, my friend—only a brilliant piece of information I gave him, about a very sweet young dancer . . . Yes, de Fronsac is dramatic critic to *La Voix Parisienne* . . . Well, I promised to put him on to another brilliant bit of copy, on condition that he and I—and Dubois, the editor of *La Soirée*, whom he knows quite intimately—should go and discuss the matter over a bock, at the Café de la Lune, at the hour of the apéritif. . . . Why the Café de la Lune? My poor friend, you are no Macchiavelli! Figure to yourself, then, if I must explain everything, that this pig of Delorme is in the habit of taking his apéritif at La Lune, every evening. . . . Oh, of course, he makes quite a lot of money: *he* can sip his vermouth *every* evening—the camel! . . . Well, when we arrived at La Lune, de Fronsac, Dubois and I, there was Delorme, calmly absorbing his usual brand of poison, and talking politics to some other fool of an editor. We sat down at the table next to his, and . . . yes, de Fronsac did the thing handsomely, my old one: he paid me a demi—and the demis cost seventy-five centimes at La Lune. . . . Well, we talked of different things, and I began to

let out a hint or two about Gambetta, and Thiers, and some of their friends. . . . I dropped the name of Arsène Lepeltier. . . . My friend, you are not a Republican? . . . Anyway, Dubois' paper is . . . and so is *La Gazette*, although, as you know, there is a standing quarrel between the two . . . Dubois began to take up the hint . . . I could see Delorme had overheard some of our remarks; he called for ink and paper—and I went on . . . Dubois became more enthusiastic, and said he would write a leader about Lepeltier on the very next day . . . Yes, and all the time, Delorme—the pig!—was scribbling away at break-wrist speed! . . . My friend, how I laughed in my beard—I am clean-shaven, you say?—Well, it is but a figure of speech, such as we artists may use as we please. . . . As I was saying, how I laughed in my beard, when I saw Delorme at last put his manuscript into an envelope, bellow to a chasseur to despatch it to his office without delay, and let out a sigh of contentment as his gaze rested for an instant, with a malicious twinkle, on his rival Dubois, who was waiting till the next day! . . . My dear one, I felt like doing a gentle tango—or even a turkey-trot—with the *gérant* of the café—but I was strong enough to conquer my impulse: what will you? Art has her dictates! . . . Well, that is all. . . . The rest came of its own accord . . . Lajeunie made a hit, and so did Tricotrin . . . And I? My friend, I have earned the gratitude of my copain and of Art—and yes, Gustave and I *have* made a song about it, which has rather caught on at the Scala. . . . You ask whether we are rich? . . . Well, that would hardly be the word for it—but if you are in need of a louis, my old one? Yes? . . . Well, here you are, then; take it, with the unsolicited compliments of Delorme—that pig of Delorme!"

II

RUDYARD KIPLING

THE SONG OF THE PENNY WHISTLE

THEY dursn't give a child a boomerang—
A shot-gun plays no end of devilish pranks—
The high-falutin' toys, they may go hang,
The patent, sickening toys that earn no thanks—
I'm blest by every kid that laughs or wails,
I'm ready to be lost and knocked about,
I'm never broke or tired,—when all else fails,
You should hear me put an end to Tommy's shout !

With my "speedy-wheedy-wheedy-wheedy-whish !"
You should watch me raise the hair upon your head,
Just as Tommy, glad at howling at his wish,
Gets a licking from his dad, and crawls to bed !

In the nurs'ry's quiet depth, behind the nurse,
When Tommy's sick at heart and has the blues,
You can hear me none the less—I'm none the worse
For his thrashing, or his pater's loud abuse ;
You can hear me letting forth from out his heart
The bitterness that chokes a six-year-old,
And the joy and boyish hope that won't depart,
And the "No, I shan't, *I shan't* do what I'm told !"

With my "whizy-jizy-jizy-jee!"

In the greasy, dirty, gaunt, foul-living slum,
I'm the voice of squalid nippers, mixed among the
 smell of kippers,
And the only voice from heaven in the hum!

In the filthy, lurid court, where man and wife
Leave behind an evil reek of beer and gin,
In the netherworld of bitterness and strife,
I alone am pure and clean, beside the din!
I'm the voice of dirty bairns who want to live,
And I stand for their desire untarnished, whole—
I'm the only thing they love and *couldn't* give,
I'm the echo bursting forth from out their soul!

Yea, my "Hity-tity-tity-tity-hy!"

Is the purest, whitest call amid the dirt;
I'm the dazzling, shining, flicker that is not yet
 drowned in liquor,
I'm the song of life unsoiled, unspoiled, unhurt!

When the traffic roars and surges through the town,
'Mid the bustle and the shouts of swearing men—
With the motor-'buses rushing up and down,
And the horses battling on right through the den—
When the good old stoutish lady'd like to cross,
And she cringes, and she gasps, and cannot dare,
When she tries, and turns, and trots, all at a loss—
Then my time has come to help—for I am there!

With my "Hooty-tooty-tooty-tooty-too!"

I stop the howling bedlam for the dame—
I'm the trumpet of the Squire that shall pull her from
 the mire,
I'm the voice that quells disorder, blows, and shame!

When you've had your evening's talk, your last, *last*
drink,
And you're passing through the hall of your old club—
When your wife has heard the play, and wants to
think,
And you can't afford a motor (there's the rub!),—
When you're fed up with the party, and the ball,
And you manage to be left alone—and quit—
When you're rushing, or you're sneaking, through the
hall,
Don't I help you with my call and with my grit?

With my " Ritty-titty-titty-titty-whee ! "
I'm the magnet for the cab that drives you back,
I'm the magic wand of wealth, I'm the call that gives
by stealth
All the luxury of thousands that you lack !

In the far-off field of death where men will roam,
'Mid the trenches' zig-zag line, and clinging mud,
When no one dares to think of those at home,
And a shot rings now and then—'mid trickling blood—
In the cold, or in the blazing, red-hot sun,
In the torture-rack of this worst human hell—
I just rally 'em to work that's to be done—
I call 'em on—by God, *I* do it well !

With my " Ready-steady-steady-steady-rush ! "
You can see 'em run, and crawl, and gasp for breath—
Yea, *I* make 'em look alive—make 'em men, to dare,
and strive—
I'm the war-march, charging on, right on, to Death !

Let the full-blown blast of bands resound on high,
With their brass, and with their wood-wind, and their
string :

They are changing—they were born—and they must
die,

They are faked, and forged, and fed—they're not
the thing.

No, whatever be their time, their ringing strain,
Be it rag-time, boiling-hot, or Wagner's song,
There is something cramped and stiff in their refrain,
There is something—you can feel it—that is wrong !

But my "Hya-heea-hya-heea-whop !"

Is the human cry, from cradles unto graves—
From young lips that don't yet ken, to the hearts of
dying men,

I'm the deathless cry of children and of braves !

III

MAURICE HEWLETT

LORE OF NARCISSUS

THAT Narcissus, nimble-bodied and fair-faced as were the gods of old, aye, and the men the which builded them in their gossamer-realm of chanting myth—that Narcissus, I say, promptly fell in love with his own beauty the very first time he was confronted with it, no simple-minded scholar is prepared to deny. Those were the golden days, the which have fled, the which have fled,—and the face of our sylvan pools reflects no more that of a beauteous and unsophisticated youth who may be enamoured of his own rippling image. And the simple-minded scholar himself, however innocent his thoughts, however young he may have kept his threescore year old imagination ever bubbling over with visions of fleeting nymphs, while his deafened ears ring forever with the sweet sound of the fond kisses stolen from their nimble lips by some laughing faun, aye, even by old Pan himself—our simple-minded scholar, I say, cannot conjure up to his dear old bespectacled eyes the picture of a mediæval Narcissus, a Narcissus neither young, nimble

nor fair. . . . A Narcissus neither young, nimble, nor fair? Aye, I hear ye start, O simple-minded scholar: a Narcissus cannot be old, stiff or plain; is he not the living incarnation of all that beauty the which has fled? . . . Maybe—maybe; who can tell? But be all this as it may, hear ye the tale of our mediæval Narcissus, middle-aged at best, supple at most, and hardly even comely—our mediæval Narcissus, I say, who, if he did not fall a captive to his own charms, fell a slave—aye, and a dead slave at that—to his own mirrored likeness—as our hero of bygone days and beauty.

In the year 1367—pray remark that this date may be of ominous import to my hero (for do not its figures call forth the total of 17?) an import the which our modern science is apt to ignore—to ignore or to laugh at—in the year 1367, I say, I find my Narcissus—one Paolo Testadoro—calmly seated in an unpretentious tavern behind the Merceria, just off Rialto, in the most ducal and noble city of Venice. There he sits, middle-aged at best: aye, forty-five summers, no doubt, have burned his ruddy face and strewn the slanting forehead with endless creases and wrinkles deeply dug; there he sits, nimble no longer, supple at most: for a soldier cannot afford to stiffen right away, and must, if he would remain alive, preserve some drops of oil in his joints, some bands of steel in his wrists, and a lively play of eye and ear; there he sits, hardly even comely—hardly even comely. Scarred, wrinkled, and crimson, moustachios to the sky, with a great grey cloak, well worn, well torn, covering a seedy leather jerkin that has seen better days; one arm crooked towards his face, the other fondling the long rapier that dangles at his side: his large felt hat propped negligently on the tavern table;

wistful, disconsolate, with never a thought of mirth that a fiasco of scarlet ruby juice can light ; there he sits, brooding over his sorrowful plight. It is still light—still Apollo has not drawn his golden horses behind the wall of night—and, but for Testadoro, the tavern is empty, empty even, for the now, of the girl who had brought him his flagon “of thy landlord’s best, thou blue-eyed madonna.” The girl was comely, had worn a deep blush when he so fervently addressed her—and had run out as soon as she had discharged her duty. She had run out away from him, from *him*, Paolo Testadoro, late of Padua, formerly of Naples, than whom none had been more dearly—aye, and more often,—loved. Could this slip of a girl actually disdain him of the conquering moustachios and feathered felt ? No, by Cock, she could not—and he was going to prove it !

He rose from his stool—where he had been squatting on his hams—and was suddenly confronted with a weather-beaten and wrinkled cavalier, the sure offspring of a long, wicked, and very noble line of condottieri, who wore a grey cloak, like his own, and a frown the like of his. They say that a man forewarned is forearmed, for that he may not then be taken unawares ; and it must then follow that if you warn not a man, he is apt either to fall behind in an emergency, or to rush hot-headed into the fray. Testadoro, I say, rising from his seat, saw a soldier suddenly emerge from out the solitude he had thought he was in—and the blood came surging to his ready brain. “By Cock,” he thought, “yon is the scarecrow who has frightened away the wench. And I thought myself alone in this thieves’ den of a tavern ! If that swelled-out bladder of a greasy old swash-buckler believe he may play the rival to the wench

I have wooed—aye, and won—it is time to cut him into strips, by Cock !”

His face was bent on wearing a deeper crimson still ; not wine gives a visage that deep and daring flush, the which is the lawful fruit of anger, hate and speed. Nor did he notice that the same ominous crimson wave had spread over the countenance of the man now confronting him—his rival, by Cock ! Aye, that was the one and only thought that weighed upon his massive head, and while he stood looking at his rival’s age-worn cloak, he let out his words from the rancour of his heart. “Heigho, my friend, thinkest thou to oust me in war or love ? I was old in both ere thou leftest thy swaddling clout. Thou wast not yet weaned, when I was deep in fire and in wenchés’ kisses. Thrice pierced through the heart, and ten times left for dead, with my record of three hundred notches on my trusty rapier—aye, by Cock, a notch for a life—thou thinkest not to startle me, thou pasty-faced son of a mendicant friar, thou bepaunched and tallow-eyed powerless ruffian ? Get thee out of this before I dispatch thee to hell, by Cock—and leave me to mine own business, while thou mindest thine among the thieves and other gallows’ birds, thy brethren !”

Not an answer pealed to his ready ears ; after this outburst, the figure opposite him dared take up a waiting pose, as if it too were listening for an answer, the which came not. “By Cock,” roared Testadoro, “thou art no more than a bladder, I see, for that thou canst not even give a reply to a civil speech ! Well, I consider thee carrion at this silence ; and thou shalt not fail to descend right swiftly to the other old Charion and his sticks. Now then, have at thee, hell-bird !”

Scowling at his enemy, our hero let his thoughts forage deep into the past, for as soon as the haze swept away from golden memory, there were before him feats of arms, feats of arms—aye, and feats of love galore—the which no seedy youth of these days, however brave of heart and hand, could ever have dreamed in his most sanguine dreams . . . And now, of what avail was all this brilliant past of loves and fights, when this whipper-snapper of a man should dare confront him in silence, and pretend to rob him of a wench who was legitimately his? A rival—that he should have a rival! It had come to that! And a rival, moreover, whom no raging words of his could urge into a like torrent of comely, godly, sweet abuse.

There are some whose fiery speech, like a surging torrent of lava, requires the cold and solid impassiveness of rock and wind to burst out at its fiercest—some whom silence does but irritate the more—to whom calm is as the whip-lash to the bolting foal. Such an one was our Testadoro, and quiet was a particular stimulant to his ire. If he should encounter a merry devil of a swashbuckler, free of his words as of his blows, with an unquenchable and multilingual fountain of ready oaths at the back of his tongue, a fellow whom it was a pleasure to hark to, in a word, be you a man of arms or a lady of pleasure—then, I say, would none be so bent on making a friend of him as Paolo Testadoro, late of Padua, formerly of Naples. There are many like him, moreover, for what do we all most admire in others, but the qualities—aye, and the foibles too—the which fail not in us? Broadly speaking, every man is a mirror—but I must not enter upon a discussion.

With a howl like that of a bleeding calf, Testadoro flung himself at his opponent, who, if truth must

be told, was responsible for the like gestures, though in unwonted silence. Rapier in hand, his fury was such as that of a belling stag in a dismal glade—and such was his roaring—the echoes of the which were his only reply—the echoes, aye, and an ear-splitting, thundering, resounding crash, as if all the bottles in the little tavern had taken it into their glossy bellies to fall at the same time. In came running the girl of innocent wiles—the unhappy cause of the disaster, a frown of foreboding and of fear by now printed on her comely brow. When she entered the tavern room, alas, a scene of wreck and desolation met her liquid eye—a lifeless mass of glass splinters, felt hats, grey coats, broken rapiers, and a surging ocean of blood.

“Madonna! Lo specchio mio!” she cried, and bent down towards the mess. . . . There was—or rather there was no more—the worthy Paolo Testadoro, late of Padua, formerly of Naples, with bits of shattered glass prodded into his forty-five summered body, and the point of a glass rapier well spitted through his heart.

Thus, in the year of grace 1367, it befell a warrior bold to gaze at his own reflection in a high Venetian mirror, the pride of Murano, and the joy of a comely wench—and his fate, alike that of the beauteous Narcissus of old, was sealed thereby, and his life brought to an ignominious—if unexpected—close—a conclusion as sound as that I, the chronicler, sit here to write.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SOME HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED RHYMES
FROM "A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES."

THE MOTOR CAR

THE motor-car is full of fire,
And roars along at heart's desire...
Oh! How I'd love to be the man
Who guides it straight behind a van!

Just think how jolly it must be
To dodge and run, and toot, and see
The little children cross or gay
Run helter-skelter from its way!

The motor-car, besides, is full
Of noise—just like a charging bull—
And nothing looks so strong or swift—
Not ev'n a train, not ev'n a lift.

But then, the motor-car must run
In pelting rain—and *that's* no fun:
It's better far for little boys
To sit at home beside their toys.

THE LAMP

WHEN the sun goes down far behind the west
Long before it's time to lie down to rest,
Then my nurse comes in, and she lights the lamp . . .
But it smells of oil, and its light seems damp.

I should like a lamp just like Dickie's own :
You turn a knob, and it burns alone ;
You don't need a match, and it's always right ;
It's shut up in glass, and can burn all night.

LANGUAGES (1)

I met a little girl to-day,
Who's very nice to run and play—
But what she says is so, so queer,
I can't make out the things I hear !

And when I rested on a bench,
Nurse said the little girl was French:
Why can't the children of all lands
Speak so that each one understands ?

HAPPY THOUGHT (2)

WHEN I grow up, of course I'll be
An aviator all may see :
And those who gave me sums to do,
I'll drop upon them from the blue,
Right through their roofs, upon their beds,
And crack their silly, cruel heads

(1)—Young R.L.S. had evidently not yet heard of esperanto, nor even of volapuck. (Ed.)

(2)—This "happy thought" is of course of a rather more blood-thirsty nature than those generally expressed in "A Child's garden." The provocation of "sums to do," however, justifies retaliation. (Ed.)

BOOKS (3)

THE letters black, that all may know,
Are just like soldiers in a row,
And though they're silent, stiff and still,
I hear their talk, I see their drill.

And all the pages of the book,
They seem to call: "*Do* come and look!
I've lovely treasures, all for you" . . .
And when I read, I love them too.

It must be grand, I think, to write
A book to please the children bright,
To make their eyes and hearts aglow
With thoughts they feel, and words they know!

(3)—This shows young R.L.S. in the light of a true prophet.
(Editor's notes).

ROBERT HICHENS

THE BLOOD OF THE CALL

ON an afternoon in April, a man was carelessly sauntering along the Strand. At first sight, he would have attracted no more notice than thousands of other men walking in the streets at the same time ; but seen nearer, he was different. He was not old, although a sort of unnatural stoop seemed to possess his back ; and contrasting with the light shining in his eyes, his skin had a bizarre yellowish hue that is not generally seen in an Englishman : his high forehead, and aquiline nose, moreover, seemed to belie the roundness of his chin, and thick, sensuous lips added a touch of effeminacy to his already uncommon allure. He was well dressed, in so far as his suit was of good cloth and cut to the height of fashion ; yet, somehow, it did not seem to fit him as it ought. It was easy to see that foreign blood flowed in his veins. Paul Cashmere—for that was his name—had been born in Egypt ; his father was English, and his mother was of Oriental extraction—indeed, it was rumoured that she descended from one of the sacred dancers in a small island of the Malay Archipelago, who had been loved—and carried off—by an

English conqueror at the time of Clive or Warren Hastings. Be this as it may, Paul had, at all events, some beautiful Oriental jewels in his bachelor's chambers behind Hannover Square, which had been left to him by his mother when she died, and it is quite possible that she had also told him some of the strange tales connected with the gems, magnificent turquoises, blazing rubies, cunningly-mounted emeralds, and glistening pearls—which alone represented a small fortune.

Cashmere felt peculiarly distrait on that warm afternoon—a sensation as of physical hunger gnawing somewhere at his body as well as at his soul. Yet he had no reason whatever to be unhappy, or even ill at ease. He was comfortably off, with no cares for the future—which did away once for all with the idea that he might have done without lunch on that or any other day; and, moreover, he was engaged to be married to Esther Longwood, a very pretty girl whom he had met several times at Lady Markham's, fallen in love with, and eventually proposed to and been accepted by. He was to take her to the theatre to-night—and he had absolutely no cause for bodily uneasiness. He had always enjoyed the best of healths, his Egyptian birth mingling with his British education, to give him corporal hardiness and vigour. Yes, everything was going very well with him, and yet he felt something unaccountably bizarre this afternoon, something that made him oblivious to all the life and bustle that surrounded him, concentrating his sensations and emotions to that little, insidious, gnawing pang, which went on pecking at his body,—or was it his soul?

Cabs and taxis were rushing on, conveying hurried men to stations, or pretty women to their friends.

Motor-'buses were pounding along, uttering their fierce growl. Crossing-sweeps and newspaper boys were running from one side to the other, dodging the heavy traffic. Here were pompous business-men, in frock-coats and top hats, reading their paper as they walked. And there were women—pretty women who stood gazing in front of jewellers' shops, or plain ones, their hands full of parcels, calling lustily to a disobedient child. A dog was sitting wistfully on a tobacconist's doorstep, as if it understood the secret of human life—and were sorry for it. A cat, gliding nearly up to it, arched her back and started hissing fiendishly. There, in the middle of the street, stood a policeman, the picture of stolidness, helping nervous old dames through the bedlam of traffic. All sorts of noises mingled together in an increasing and glaring hum : the stamping of hoofs, the roar of motors, the tramping of hundreds of feet, the shrill cries of surprise, joy or pain, the hissing of a distant siren, the rumble of a heavy van—and the twitter of birds. And everything and everyone seemed to be there for a purpose ; all had some definite object to do.

And yet, as Paul walked on, the continual oppression of this little thing continued to claw at him without any apparent reason. He felt a mysterious something within him, as though the poisonous fangs of a hissing snake were trying to clutch at his soul. . . For it was his soul, surely. Hunger he had not, he could not have. . . . What could it be his innermost being was thus yearning for? He had never had this strange feeling before. . . . He walked listlessly along ; from time to time, he responded, quite absently, to a friend's nod, or to an acquaintance's more elaborate salutation. But he would have been

unable to recognize them himself, or even to remember those whom he had indeed met on his way. His thoughts were wandering in a maze of strange sensations, in which the little gnawing pain was the eternal leit-motiv, while his mind was really focussed on no definite object. He saw the things around him, and yet he heeded them not. Dozens of pretty faces might have reminded him of his young fiancée, but he did not smile back at the gushing or ironical smiles that came his way : he had no eye for beauty or for youth . . . His soul had, for the moment, completely dispossessed his body.

Without his noticing it, he had left the busy thoroughfares, to reach the comparative calm of more secluded streets. He passed along a garden, from which flowed to his ready nostrils delicate perfumes of honeysuckle and sweet-peas. The odour attracted him unwillingly, and he stopped for a moment, looking absently at the sunny beds and shady leaves. Suddenly he noticed a bee emerge from behind a nettle that a careless gardner had allowed to grow in this beautifully cultivated spot. The insect hovered for an instant over a bed of wall-flowers, flew further, alighted on a massif of pansies, again bounded off, and seemed to disdain all these delicate and sweet-smelling jewels in bloom. It flew from one to another, seeking here, looking there, but apparently finding nowhere that upon which it had started on its mysterious and all-important mission. Paul saw it flit from stem to stem, from petal to petal, listless, disconsolate, just as he. What was it seeking, this humble insect? What was the unknown pain gnawing at its soul? . . . All at once, the bee seemed to have found its mission ; it shot forth like a blazing topaz in the sun, straight to the

ugly, poisonous, wild nettle from which Paul had seen it emerge, and there it remained, apparently contented at last. Was that, then, the rôle for which it had been created—to flutter an instant amid the smiling sun and laughing flowers—only to be fatally attracted, in the end, by the squalid plant from which it had issued?

Paul walked on, and now the gnawing pain came on him in its fullest strength. He reached his rooms more distressed than he could remember having been since he had had the scarlet fever as a boy, and was somewhat relieved when his Arab servant told him, in French, that a gentleman was waiting for him.

He found his visitor in the sitting-room. He was a man of thirty-five, perhaps forty, with a large black beard, and piercing, green eyes; he was scrupulously attired in black frock-coat and trousers, while a large black silk tie falling right down on to his shirt-front proclaimed him to be a Frenchman, and moreover an artist.

"I have the honour of addressing Monsieur Paul Cashmere?" he asked in very bad English.

"That is my name, Monsieur," answered Paul, in very fluent French, which tongue he had acquired as a boy, in the East. "Pray, be seated, and converse in your own tongue—for I presume you are a Frenchman, Monsieur," he added, smiling.

"You are right, Monsieur," was the reply. "I am Emile Roussillon, and you may have heard my name . . ."

"Emile Roussillon!" exclaimed Cashmere, "why, Esther Longwood, the lady I am affianced to, has often spoken to me about you. Although I have never met you, I seem to know you very well, and I

can assure you you are most welcome in these bachelor's chambers."

"Thank you, Monsieur," courteously answered Roussillon. "It is indeed from my dear friend, Miss Longwood, that I heard of you, and I call upon you at the present moment at her request."

"You have seen her? She is not unwell?" Paul hastily cried out, forgetting his own mysterious pain.

"No, Monsieur, I have not seen her for over three months," replied the Frenchman. "But I presume her health is most excellent, as I received a telegram from her as late as yesterday evening. But, no doubt," he added, smiling, "you have had the occasion of seeing Miss Longwood long since I saw her last, and therefore you can be sure of what I can but conjecture."

The subject of health suddenly brought back to Paul the pangs he had been feeling before the advent of his visitor. Roussillon went on:

"As I said, I received a telegram, yesterday night, from Miss Longwood, asking me to call upon you this afternoon, and to join you and your fiancée at the theatre to-night. She wishes me to make the acquaintance of her future husband, and I doubt not that a *soirée* at a theatre in your company will be a great pleasure to me—if only I may believe I do not intrude."

"Not at all," said Paul, "you are most heartily welcome, and besides, any summons from Esther is to me a command."

He called his Arab servant, and told him to bring in Turkish Coffee.

"I am sure you will accept a cup of your favourite beverage, Monsieur," he added courteously, glancing at his visitor.

“Although I am not in the habit of drinking coffee in the afternoon—I am afraid we French have taken to tea,” Roussillon replied, “I shall be very pleased to partake of a cup after my journey—besides which I have found that coffee always gives me ideas.”

They drank coffee as only connoisseurs can drink and appreciate it, and as though to emphasize the poet's words, his talk became brilliant with psychological insight and the latest Parisian potins. He made an appointment with his host: he was to meet him and his fiancée at the theatre, and to have supper after the performance, at Rusticani's; “Yes,” thoughtfully added Paul, “Rusticani's is the best place in London to get a good *soufflé à la vanille* and a decent cup of coffee. I much prefer it to Cavalleri's, although it is much less fashionable . . .”

Roussillon withdrew, his mind full of his friend's betrothed, whose character he had already summed up. As a psychologist he was well known, his verses having taken Paris by storm two years ago; and it was no new experience for him to penetrate into the innermost secrets of a man's soul—or of a woman's—in the time it took for an idle conversation. Nevertheless, he was glad to know he would have ample opportunities to-night, at the theatre and at the restaurant, of confirming his first observations.

When Emile Roussillon arrived at the immense play-house that night, his friends were already there, and beckoned him to the empty seat they had kept for him; he and Paul were on either side of Esther, whose rosy cheeks, without even a suspicion of rouge or of powder, seemed to burst into a brilliancy of pleasure at seeing her friend and her lover and at the expectation of the performance. Roussillon chatted

wittily in French, and noticed that Cashmere seemed more silent and constrained than in the afternoon. He saw the musicians file into their seats before the curtain; a little man with white hair stepped into the orchestra, waved his baguette, and the overture began.

The curtain was raised on an Oriental scene, in some far-off imaginary land, where the sky is a delicate blue, and palm-trees seem to grow everywhere at once. Men in flowing silken garments, women in fantastic kimono-gowns, moved along the stage, sang, and danced. The play was a new opera by a young Italian master, who had aimed at something at once original and highly realistic. So his librettist had chosen to carry away the audience to some distant Eastern island, while the composer introduced some weird and savage music into his score—the exact rendering, said the play-bills, of exotic melodies, harmonised according to the laws of those far-away islands.

Roussillon studied the faces of his two companions as the play proceeded. The girl's eyes were full of wonder and joy, but her ears seemed to shrink from the bizarre harmony, full of discordant sounds that burst upon them: she was evidently interested in the play, but it did not grip her completely: from time to time, even, she allowed her gaze to roam across the stalls, or to meet the smiling eyes of her friend. Paul, on the contrary, appeared to drink in the wonderful sights and sounds: the mysterious flowers, the coral-besparkled sea, the sapphire sky, sank deep into his eyes, while the unnatural music was ardently drunk by his ready ears. There was a little tinkling trill, to a bass accompaniment of tom-toms and exotic lutes, that completely held him under

a spell. And, now and again, he would seem to quiver all over with the strange rhythm and the fantastic passion of the music, with the sensuous and thrilling horror of the play.

Before the curtain fell on the last act, he nervously clutched at Esther's arm, and said in a terse whisper : " I cannot endure it any longer—I must go now." All three filed out of the theatre, amid the unwelcome whisperings of incensed spectators behind them, and Paul spoke out, a twinge of pain on his yellow face—more yellow than ever in the twilight of a theatre vestibule. while the play is still going on. " Monsieur," he said to Roussillon, in French, " I must beg of you to excuse me . . . I absolutely cannot go to a restaurant now : I feel ill, I feel . . . I do not really know what I feel . . . If you will do me the favour of accompanying Esther, I shall deem it a great service . . . And you, my dearly-beloved," he added, turning to the girl, who was visibly upset by this sudden and painful contretemps, " you too must excuse me if I play the rôle of a cold douche on your projected pleasure . . . Really, I must return to my rooms ; I am not fit to remain out. . . ."

" My poor Paul, of course you are not to stay out if you feel unwell. I *do* hope it will prove to be nothing serious . . . Send me a note as soon as you can."

Roussillon hailed a cab for his new friend and Paul gave his address in a hoarse whisper that was painful to hear. He entered the cab without a word, and was driven off.

When he remained alone with Esther, the poet looked at the shivering girl : " Come," he said, " let us go and have some supper, you look as if you needed it."

"No, Emile" answered the girl, "I cannot think of swallowing a morsel while poor dear Paul is suffering like that. . . . No, we shall not go to Rusticani's to-night; but drive me home, and tell me about Paul," she added, smiling wistfully.

Roussillon hailed a hansom, and gave the driver Esther's address, adding, in his foreign English, that he was not to drive too fast. The man nodded, his face wreathed in a vicious smile, which expressed itself in the few words of foul slang he uttered while he was regaining his box. Esther and her friend were driven away in their turn.

The girl's anxious eyes were turned towards the poet's piercing gaze: "Well," she exclaimed, "what is your opinion of Paul? I am glad you have seen him, and spoken to him—it was really most kind of you to obey my sudden telegram, but I am sorry he should feel unwell just on this occasion . . . And you are something of a doctor, Emile," she added hastily, "you often told me of your experiences as a medical student in Paris . . . Tell me what is the matter with Paul. . . . But tell me first of all what you think of him. Is he not a splendid fellow?"

"Certainly," replied Roussillon, "he is a splendid fellow—of that I am convinced. . . . Has he only English blood in his veins?"

"How penetrating you are!" cried out the girl. "No, his mother was of Oriental extraction; her ancestors lived somewhere in the Malay Archipelago."

"Just what I thought," muttered the psychologist. "His pain must be more immaterial than physical, more of the soul than of the body. I dare say Charcot could, at a glance, diagnose his case quite accurately; but I have not Charvot's experience and training . . . Still, I believe your fiancé's English

body is a ready receptacle for all sorts of mysterious Eastern traditions, thoughts, or sensations . . . Do not misunderstand me, Esther," he continued, as he saw an expression of awe flit into her ready gaze, "I do not wish to say anything unkind, or to cause either him or you the slightest sorrow. But, while your future husband will lead the life of a respectable English gentleman, I feel sure some part of his soul will, from time to time, be impregnated with ancestral memories, with Oriental, Extreme-Oriental, instincts and habits. We must all heed to the call of our primeval blood—and Orientals above all. . . ."

"What do you mean?" Esther anxiously asked, "That he will go and do something dreadfully eccentric . . . worship a totem, or something like that?"

"Perhaps not," he answered, smiling. "He will, perhaps, *do* nothing at all. The call will perhaps only appeal to the innermost recesses of his soul—that is no doubt the explanation of the bizarre feeling that troubled him to-night. But," he thoughtfully added, "I daresay a good night's rest will bring the Western man out again."

"And you think such attacks as this will go on wearying him at regular intervals?" said the girl, now somewhat reassured by her companion's optimism.

"No," he replied, "certainly not at regular intervals. But most probably they will recur; they will no doubt become fewer and farther between, and weaker, too, but they are practically bound to come on: the body, like the soul, cannot remain for ever deaf to the imperious call of ancestry; blood has a voice, which must be heard from time to time. It shall be heard . . . it is at the present moment . . . But I think nothing more terrible may occur than some inconvenience as to-night."

"At all events," muttered Esther, "I am glad you like Paul. Oh, how I wish we were married already!"

Her young face was brilliant now with gushing hope and joy that her recent anxiety had suppressed. They were already nearing her familiar house. The hansom was rattling through grim, quiet streets where unnatural darkness was but bespecked by the yellow glow of gas lamps. No other cabs seemed to be out at this yet early hour; people were still at the theatres or in the music-halls,—or at most in the restaurants. She looked out of the window, and saw but vague outlines of gaunt houses, a railing that flickered an instant in the light of a lamp, the fleeting curb,—but never a human soul. And she felt glad at being alone with her old friend, who had brought some consolation into her anxious mind, with the never-failing weight of his psychological experience.

The hansom slowed down, and stopped in front of a dark mansion. Esther recognised her own home, and got out, while Roussillon paid and dismissed the cabman, who drove off with a muttered remark of "'Ad enough of it, you two?"—The poet saw his friend into her house.

"Oh," he exclaimed in French, as he took leave of her, "I forgot to tell you I am not returning to Paris till to-morrow night. I am staying at Charing Cross, as usual. I hope to hear from you, Esther . . . Good-night."

"Good-night," the girl gently responded, "and thank you for remaining another day. I shall certainly see you to-morrow. Good-night."

Emile Roussillon walked back to his hotel, his mind wrapped up in thought. "Poor Esther," he muttered, "I tried to reassure her: she must be

distraite by some welcome thought. But I feel sure that Paul Cashmere has heard the Call to-day ; the play itself has acted upon the hidden springs of his soul . . . The Blood has called . . Who knows whether the Call does not demand Blood ? ” . . . He collided into a burly policeman, who no doubt imagined him to be drunk, but let him proceed without undue interference. He barely missed being run over as he crossed a large thoroughfare, alive with its nocturnal traffic. He trod on a blind beggar's toes, and nearly crushed a stray dog. “ Poor Esther ! ” he murmured once more as he reached his hotel.

* * * * *

The next morning at eleven, as he sat writing in his luxurious room, an obsequious waiter brought him a note which had just been delivered by a messenger-boy. Roussillon recognised Esther's handwriting at once, and tore open the envelope. “ My dear Emile,” it ran, “ *do* come at once to the enclosed address. I will explain later. Yours, E.L.” Enclosed was one of Cashmere's visiting cards.

Roussillon jumped up, set his hat upon his head, and rushed out. He hailed a waiting cab in front of the hotel, and gave Paul's address. All was a babel of bustle and noise. . . . Cabs and taxis were rushing on, conveying hurried men to stations, or pretty women to their friends. Motor-'buses were pounding along, uttering their fierce growls. Crossing-sweeps and newspaper-boys were running from one side to the other, dodging the heavy traffic. Here were pompous business-men in frock-coats and top hats, reading their papers as they walked. And there were women—pretty women who stood gazing in front of

jewellers' shops, or plain ones, their hands full of parcels, calling lustily to a disobedient child. A dog was sitting wistfully on a tobacconist's doorstep, as if it understood the secret of human life—and were sorry for it. A cat, gliding nearly up to it, arched her back and started hissing fiendishly. There, in the middle of the street, stood a policeman, the picture of stolidness, helping nervous old dames through the bedlam of traffic. All sorts of noises mingled together in an unceasing and glaring hum: the stamping of hoofs, the roar of motors, the tramping of hundreds of feet, the shrill cries of surprise, joy or pain, the hissing of a distant siren, the rumble of a heavy van—and the twitter of birds. And everything and everyone seemed to be there for a purpose; all had some definite object to do.

While this tableau was unravelling itself before his half-closed eyes, like a huge cinema-film, Roussillon thought of his friend and her fiancé, and dark visions of foreboding seemed to cloud the clear and sunny day. The morning produced upon his highly-strung imagination the effect of some large antediluvian beast, just about to spring, and his mind's eye was deep in the horror of blood . . . the Blood of the Call, as he himself had named it but yesterday.

He alighted from his cab in front of Paul's rooms, and met the Arab servant just as he had passed the threshold.

"Where is your master?" he asked, in French.

"Follow me, I will take you to him," the lad answered, in the same tongue.

Roussillon was conducted to Cashmere's bedroom, where he saw Esther's anxious form, and that of a doctor bending over a sickbed. He walked across to it, and saw Paul's yellow face, immobile as if in a

trance, and horribly distorted by pain, while the pillow and bedclothes were smeared with blood.

"Ah, you have come, Emile," murmured the girl, and introduced her friend to the doctor.

"Good morning, Monsieur," said the physician. "I am sorry to make your acquaintance under such painful auspices . . . My dear," he added, turning to Esther, "will you leave us for a few moments? I wish to say a word to Monsieur Roussillon."

The girl obediently left the room, with an anxious glance at her senseless lover.

"Monsieur," exclaimed the doctor as soon as she was gone, "this is a horrible case! My patient is dead . . ."

"Dead? Alas!" broke out Roussillon.

"Quite dead . . . Miss Longwood does not know yet; I told her he was in a trance . . . But he is no more. . . . And the most horrible part is, he seems to have died of poison; the symptoms clearly point to an Oriental alkaloid, which is only found in some islands of the Malay Archipelago; I have tested the blood, which I found gushing from his mouth, and it corroborates the first symptoms. How can the poor man have been poisoned?"

"Good heavens!" suddenly exclaimed Roussillon, "I think I understand. The inhabitants of these particular islands are cannibals, are they not?"

"Some of them are,—most of them, even," assented the doctor.

"And they use this alkaloid to poison their arrows, and spears, and other weapons . . . Monsieur," he added in a tragic whisper, "Monsieur Cashmere has heard the voice of his ancestors—and this"—he pointed to the blood-stains on the dead man's bed—"this is the Blood of the Call. Yesterday Cashmere

heard the imperious voice : the moral and physical gnawing he felt in his body and in his soul was the *cannibal hunger*. The play he witnessed last night set his dormant ancestry afire, and I doubt not that it kindled, at the same time, some of this poison in his finger-tips . . . for you know that cannibals often poison their nails as they do their other weapons. As he slept, no doubt, the gnawing, the cannibal hunger, grew stronger and stronger ; they were irresistible. And Monsieur Cashmere began *eating his own fingers*. He would certainly have devoured his whole body, but for the deathly poison, which did its work before he had time to do so . . . That is all, Monsieur . . . Poor Esther ! ” he added, as an after-thought, “ this is terrible for her—but there is no resisting the voice of Nature, when she clamours for Blood.”

E. W. HORNUNG

TWO OF A TRADE

THERE was only one passenger on the little two-horse coach bustling from Clear Corner to Rosanna. A tall, gaunt, beardless man in a wide sombrero, he sat smoking a cigar, while he ineffectually tried to quench the gushing torrent of conversation that flowed forth from the driver's lips. The flood included a high percentage of profanity, the remaining minimum being mostly devoted to questions about the old country, about Government House and the new Governor, and other equally meretricious kindred subjects. The passenger's replies were short and perfunctory; of disgust he actually seemed to feel none, but he was visibly annoyed by the man's constant volley of questioning. He did not look like a trained bushman: his outward appearance had far too much of the type one may occasionally meet with in Sydney—to say nothing of the mother-country; still, he was evidently no maudlin new-chum, his neatly-couched answers, however short, being tinged with more than a suspicion of bush vernacular. He might have been an old jackeroo, back from a spree in town or at home after

some exceptionally good season ; or he might indeed be the manager of some Back-block station : an unimpressive man, at all events, he gave no clue to his occupations, desires or habits, beyond impressing upon his solitary companion, despite his laconic speech, his pleasant manners, that pleased no less for just a touch of mannerism.

The coach was slowly speeding through what was little better than a howling desert, when a horseman on a white mare suddenly cantered out of the scrub, a marvel of life among the surrounding desolation. The driver found himself looking into the muzzle of a long-barrelled revolver, and, supple in action, if more profane still in words, he pulled up his two horses, and awaited the end of the usual " sticking-up " process. So far there was no unusual feature. Then there came a spark and a crash, a volley of oaths in a new voice, and the bushranger's revolver dropped to the ground. The flood of profanity stopped short, however, and the speaker regarded the stage-coach passenger with a flaming eye that at once suggested and dismissed the idea of murder.

" Move again at your peril ! " he drawled out, his other hand emerging from out a bulging pocket, and producing another vicious-looking long-barrelled pistol. " *You* don't scare Stingaree with a baby's trick like that ! "

Before he levelled his weapon, there was another flash, another report, and the gun joined its brother on the ground.

" Had enough ? " The passenger's quiet voice leaped towards the discomfited bushranger. " Call yourself Stingaree, do you ? Just like your d—— cheek. *I'll* teach *you* to stick up Stingaree ! Get off that horse ! "

Through the smoke, a long-barrelled revolver was visible in either of his hands—the exact counterpart of those the outlaw had tried to use. His steady gaze stared out from a single eyeglass on to his sorry rival, who had by now dismounted and was stealthily stretching a hand towards his fallen weapons.

“No you don’t!” said the passenger in an impressive whisper that made the bushranger stand suddenly still. “Besides, your guns aren’t worth a d——cent, by now: I took care of that. I put a bullet into their barrels instead of putting it through your skull, but it’s not too late yet, if those hands of yours don’t go up at once, you whipper-snapper of a sham Stingaree!” Most of the nouns, I regret to say, were coupled with adjectives rich in concentrated profanity.

The discomfited bandit looked meekly on while his victor quietly jumped off the coach, his eyeglass still sticking to his eye, his revolver still turned dangerously towards *him*. A cool man evidently and used to lightning changes of fortune, he calmly looked into the murderous barrel, without attempting to disobey the other’s imperious order.

Meanwhile the passenger requested the dumb-founded driver, in flowery speech, to leave the mail-bags on the road, and to drive to Rosanna. Of hesitation the second victim showed none, and he lost no time in complying with the usual orders, muttering the usual oaths as he did so. Soon the coach was but a grey speck in the flying dust, and the victorious passenger once more turned his attention to the luckless bushranger.

“Get hold of those mail-bags,” he said in a business-like voice. The other meekly obeyed, his captor taking hold of the white mare the while. As he was

about to jump astride, there was a double flash and a loud report, and *his* long revolvers dropped to the ground, smashed to splinters. A second later, *he* found himself gazing into a similar weapon, seemingly produced out of nowhere by the bushranger, while he had been fumbling with the bags. In quick time the new conqueror was sitting in his saddle, his white mare having come back towards him as soon as she was freed of her would-be rider.

"Thought you could do me, did you?" he quietly asked of his captive. "You see, I happen to know a bit more of this business than you do, and when I stick up a coach, I also keep an extra pair of revolvers somewhere about me . . . As to shooting, my lad, I don't deny you can do some, but you can't teach *me* any monkey's tricks . . . No, my beauty," he called as the other was trying to get his right hand into his pocket, "it's hands up—or you'll have a bullet through you!"

The ex-passenger held up his hands without a word; evidently a calm man, too, he did not even trouble to let fly an oath at his captor.

"And you'd better not try to impersonate me again," the bushranger drawled out, looking at him through an eyeglass dandily stuck before his eye; "Stingaree's going to teach you a thing or two. Do you give me your dying oath you'll be up to no pranks, or do you want me to tie you up?"

"All right," came the reply, "I'll keep quiet enough. Yes, I swear it," he hastily added, as the long revolver pointed dangerously towards his head, "I swear it, by God!"

"Murder's the one crime I've never committed—but I shouldn't mind beginning on you, you second-rate imitation of a flashlight sham! And I shall

certainly do so if you don't behave. Now you catch hold of these mail-bags you were kind enough to get out of the coach for me, and come along quietly.

The passenger picked up the bags, and both now left the road for the bush, following the tracks even the rider could still easily make out. They led him through mazes of scrub and pooly glades. The bushranger seemed to find the way familiar enough, but he could not help glancing occasionally right or left to make sure of his tracks. Suddenly he found himself rolling head over heels, and falling right into a sandy gully, while a triumphant shout echoed to his smarting ears.

"Well, Mr. would-be Stingaree," rang out the passenger's voice in exulting tones, "have you got those mail-bags fixed down yet? I daresay you think yourself an expert in this little game, but you forgot to look in front of your horse's feet this time . . . A very handy thing, a couple of mail-bags, for tripping a rider . . . Now then, hands up," he added, picking up the revolver the bushranger had dropped in his fall.

The tables were turned once again, and the ill-fated bandit, as calm as after his first defeat, quietly stood up with arms outstretched towards the sky.

"I think you'll find me a better bushman than you, you new-chummiest ass of a new-chum," exclaimed the present victor. "I've had plenty of occasions to learn my business, and I've made the name of Stingaree rather well-known, right down South of the Murray, even—you ask Mr. Police Superintendent Cairns—he'll be able to tell you a thing or two about me."

"All right, man," slowly rejoined the other. "Don't get excited over it, that's all."

"Right you are, sonny. Now you just guide me to your gunyah—and you'd better do it quietly, too," he added ominously, the long revolver glinting ferociously in the slanting sun.

He jumped astride the white mare. There was a slow, caressing call, and the ex-passenger, in his turn, found himself tossed brutally on to the sand. The whole scene barely took a few seconds. In a trice, the weapon had once more changed hands, and the bushranger's eyeglass was serenely smiling at his twice-defeated captor.

"Think you know all about this business?" his gentle scorn drawled out. "You'd better take care and have a horse of your own, before you start sticking up Stingaree. There are circus-horses, my dear fellow, much worse trained than Barmaid," and his left hand lovingly patted his mare's delicate neck. "But this time, my friend, I'm going to tie you up—although you deserve a bullet through your silly head. Here, get that rope that's slung over a branch—yes, this *is* my gunyah—look sharp!"

The other meekly obeyed, and submitted to the time-honoured trick of the bushrangers. He put his foot through the loop at one end of the rope, threw the other to his captor, and suffered him to wind the coils round and round. Suddenly there was a heart-rending yell . . .

(By an unaccountable piece of ill-luck, the MS. here reaches the end of a page, and unfortunately it has been impossible to find the remaining sheets of the story.)

We are happy, however, to inform our readers that we are offering a prize of £50 a minute for life to anyone who correctly answers the question: "Which of them was Stingaree?")

E. TEMPLE THURSTON

THE FATHER OF BEAUTIFUL HOPE.

IF you cross the dark moors that lie before you when you come down from the shaggy peak of Kickshinahangit, up and above the steep valley of the Ballyhum, you will, after three hours' steady walk through their desolate stillness, look down upon the tiny village of Scrapaheap, that seems to sleep lazily in the lap of the little river of Splashum.

They have a taste for names everywhere in Ireland, but nowhere so strong as on the Western coast, not yet contaminated, for the most part, by the soul-devastating rush of "civilisation"—the railways that kill romance, the cheap trips that do away with treasures, the cockney invasion that destroys character. A little knot of pink cottages, clustered together on either side of a hardly visible ribbon that is proudly called a road, enjoys a name of itself, as if it were a village. Such a place was Scrapaheap, with its hundred odd souls, old Finnerty, the smith, O'Heily, the publican, a scrubby cobbler and a few others, living God knows how.

I walked slowly through the village, and a little further down, I saw a priest striding leisurely on,

reading his breviary the while. Now, knowing the untrodden ways of this world, I felt sure this was Father Flanagan, the parish priest, who certainly knew more about the souls in his charge than any other living man. So I walked quietly up to him.

"Good-morning, Father," I said.

"Good-morning," he answered back. "Shure it's the stranger from London ye are. 'Tis at O'Heily's ye are staying, shure? 'Tis like a prince he'll treat ye, though ye'll not find our Scrapaheap anything like Ballyhumbug or Splashatlarge."

He threw out those names, I felt, because I was foreign to his village, and might be pleased at his mentioning one or two more or less fashionable watering-places. There is, besides, much pleasure in Ireland for that man who triumphantly flings out the Irish names. No one knows why this is so, but it remains a fact.

"I'm sure O'Heily and his wife are making me quite comfortable," I returned, with an enthusiasm I am afraid I did not entirely feel . . . Such is this world: here, if he but knew, was I, seeking rest, hope, and beautiful mystery. With that damnable logic of civilisation, I could not blurt out my quest to this simple parish priest. "I'm sure they're making me quite comfortable," I repeated, "but" There was hesitation in the dropping of my voice, and Father Flanagan was not long to notice it.

"'Tis not ye were hoping for to find the comforts of a London hotel at Scrapaheap?" he said rather demurely, with the faintest suspicion of a smile playing at the corners of his mouth.

It is strange how quickly one's ears accustom themselves to the ring of unusual sounds: by now I was quite ready for the tinge of brogue on the priest's

ruddy lips. "Besides," he hastily added, "O'Heily's not a bad fella. . . . Besides, there's little Meg, an' she's always ready, with the smiling eyes of her, to make any stranger feel at home."

He had been slow to begin, but now I could see the deepest strings in the old man's heart had been set in motion. It is a nothing—a strange catch in the voice, a twitch of mouth or eye, a vibration of the hand—and the whole course of a life may be suddenly changed. It was for this, moreover, that I had come to this wild and magnificent part of the island; it is excuse or no excuse, according to those who can judge, that I was endeavouring to sift a solemn mystery, and was eager to settle an old wrong. Now, once he had spoken of Meg of his own free will, it was child's play for me to keep him to her. . . .

"There's Meg, to be sure," I said, a trifle absently. "A fine slip of a girl, too. . . . Not far from twenty, I should say."

"The way she might have been married, too," he went on, a tinge of sadness and regret mingling with his now familiar brogue.

"I should say she would not be lacking a sweetheart," I hastily put in. An Irish parish priest may be told such things: he is like a grown-up baby brother who likes to air his little secrets, in response to queries from older young people, or younger old ones.

"Indeed, sir," he plaintively answered, "'twas a faerie's look she had in the eyes of her, the sweet little colleen. An' 'tis bewitch she did young Pat Flinnerty."

"And quite right, too," I hastily added. "But you don't mean to say you believe in faeries, Father?"

"There's believin' and believin': don't they sow their seeds all round the lives of us, same as some invisible force that never ceases pushing us about? It's they gave Meg her sweetheart, an' it's they took him away."

This was rank heresy in the mouth of a priest! Well, I would taunt him another time on the point of the existence of faeries, for now I was quite content with the story of little Meg's unhappy love.

"You see," he went on, "'twas this way. Pat Flinnerty was as honest a lad as Kickshinahangit ever saw, with the snowy eyes of his. An' he was after earnin' his own living, too—what with Nalon's farm, on which 'twas he did all the work, and McGuire's dairy. Indade, he would be making quite a good sum o' yellow money, and I knew he was wanting to settle down on the farm with a good colleen for his wife . . ."

"And little Meg, of course," I hazarded.

"Shure and wasn't she herself afther a-saying of it too? Everybody knew her little secret, and didn't everybody wish her the very cheeriest happiness? . . . An' one day—'twas in May, mind ye, an' that's where the faeries come in—one day, Pat Flinnerty left Scrapaheap and never came back. Of course little Meg melted the blue eyes of hers crying, an' she came to see me, an' to ask me where Pat might be. Now, ye see, knowin' what I know, an' all about its being in May, an' the power o' the faeries, don't ye think I did well not to tell her all I knew? The telling o' the truth would have been the death of her—and she with the blue eyes of her full of tears, too. . . . So I was after a-giving her the hope I did'na feel, an' I told her Pat had gone to London to arrange about buying Nalon's farm. . . . Poor gurrll!

Shure an' she believed me too—an' I don't think 'tis a great sin on the soul of me !”

“ It's no sin at all, Father, no sin at all,” I replied encouragingly. “ As a matter of fact, it's quite true young Pat Flinnerty went over to London last May.”

“ Niver a day !” exclaimed the priest. “ An' how are ye coming to be knowing that ? ”

“ Because,” I answered very calmly, “ I am his uncle.”

“ But why the divil—no—why on earth did Pat leave Scrapaheap all on a sudden—an' without so much as saying good-bye, too ? ” said Father Flanagan.

“ That's easily explained,” I replied. “ You see, I sent a man to fetch him, and he had to leave at once, in order not to miss a very important guardians' meeting. But he wrote to Meg as soon as he got to London. I saw the letter—why, he even gave it to me to post. . . . And a nice, kind-hearted, gentle-spirited letter it was.”

“ An' 'tis the way she never received it. I tell ye 'tis the faeries,” cried the priest.

“ Impossible !” I exclaimed. Without reason, my hand went to my breast pocket, and mechanically drew something out : it was a letter—a letter addressed to Miss Margaret O'Flapperhogan, c/o Mr. O'Heily, Scrapaheap, Bondegaldée, Ireland. I let out a cry : “ Why, here it is, to be sure ! I must have posted it, *poche restante*, as the French say. To think that all this is my fault ! I shall never forgive myself.”

“ Oh, is that you, uncle ? ” cried a young voice from behind . . . A lad of about twenty came up to us, leading by the hand a blushing peasant-girl, in whom I had no difficulty in recognising little Meg. But how changed a little Meg ! The sunshine of love flowed from her innocent blue eyes, and her rosy lips

were wreathed in the sweetest of girlish smiles, while all her being bespoke radiant happiness. What a contrast to the sad and frowning little Meg I had left at the inn that very morning ! Then the young voice rang out again : “ You remember I asked your consent to marry my Irish sweetheart. . . . Here she is, uncle, and never a better lass did anyone set eyes upon.”

Meg’s blush was heightened by now, but I took her hand notwithstanding, and though she was but a peasant-girl, and some of my friends in Piccadilly might have laughed at me, I gently pressed it to my lips. “ Can you forgive me, Meg ? ” I humbly asked ; “ how you must have suffered ! And all that was due to . . . ”

“ Shure, and didn’t Father Flanagan tell me all about it ? ” she gently made answer. I was always thinkin’ ’twas the faeries—ye see, an’ it was in May too.”

“ Of course ’twas the faeries,” added the priest, smiling, and nudging me the while, “ the faeries took him away, and now they’re afther a bringin’ back of him ” . . . And his kind old eyes beamed on the blushing and happy couple.

OSCAR WILDE

ON MURDER CONSIDERED AS A FINE
ART

(An *Intended* Dialogue)

PERSONS : Cecil and Laurence.

SCENE : The library of a country-house in Yorkshire.

Cecil (leaving the piano as he hears Laurence enter) :

My dear Laurence, I thought you were never coming !

Laurence : Really, you are too flattering, my dear Cecil. I cannot but feel honoured indeed when you insinuate that you prefer my company to that of Bach or of Chopin—or was it Wagner you were playing ?

Cecil : Neither : as a matter of fact, I was strumming the popular airs in the latest Gaiety comedy.

Laurence : My dear fellow, Gaiety comedies are certainly one of the relics of barbarity which we do our best to keep.

Cecil : I really don't know about that : anybody can go and enjoy a musical comedy, which is more than can be said of the average play.

Laurence : It is just because anybody, as you say, can enjoy it, that it is a relic of primitive taste. The things *anybody* understands and appreciates—a weapon, for instance, or a blow, or a harsh cry—cannot be those which must appeal to a cultured mind or a delicately trained body.

Cecil : There may be a certain amount of truth in what you say, but I cannot agree with you to the full extent of your idea.

Laurence : What? You mean to say that some things can appeal equally well to the common and the cultivated, can delight them equally, and equally satisfy the mere lust for pleasure in the one, and the desire for beauty in the other?

Cecil : Certainly, my dear Laurence : take murder, for instance.

Laurence : Murder?

Cecil : Don't look as if you were shocked ! Murder is not only a vulgar method of doing away with an enemy, but it is also, in the hands of the elect, a fine art in itself.

Laurence : My dear Cecil !

Cecil : There can be no doubt about it, Laurence. Simply to turn to modern historical facts, who will deny that the exploits of the Borgias with poison for their means of expression, are admirable works of art in themselves? Did not that arch-murderer Cellini weave into undying masterpieces the gossamer fantasies of his brain and the blood-stained metal that his cunning hands could bear no longer? Who can deny that Catherine of Medici created an immortal symphony of blood, the echoes of which are still murmuring all through the silent corridors, the projecting turrets, and the gilded banqueting halls of the Louvre?

Do you count for nothing the scarlet tragedy of Monaldeschi kneeling at the feet of his sovereign, proud Christine of Sweden—cannot you see the abject wretch praying for his life, while his queen, despising his cowardly appeals, gives the posted assassins the sign they have agreed upon, and the treacherous ambassador is left to writhe in his own blood—a black dot on a purple sea, in the great gaunt library of Fontainebleau, whose glades are ever visited with his ghost, even as his useless coat of mail may still be seen just where he fell? Who can think without reverence of another great queen, the wistful Catherine of Russia, who could so exquisitely modulate the banal song of love—and death, on the persons of courtiers and courtesans who took her fancy—for a day? Ivan, well named the Terrible, was a fiend, of course, but there remains a charming sensation of overpowering art in the blows he dealt. . . .

Laurence: I do not pretend to deny the morbid charm of all these instances.

Cecil: My dear fellow, no *charm* can be *morbid*: it can never be anything but *charming*.

Laurence: But you yourself must allow that they all relate to royal or exalted personages—that they all occurred at least two centuries ago—and outside England. You cannot seriously contend that murder may ever be, to us, a form of art, like poetry or music?

Cecil: Your objections, my dear Laurence, do not amount to much, after all. Even everyday men and women, in our own times, and in our own “civilised” country, may attain to some artistic ability in murder: take the case of Wainwright—as an illustration: you recollect he

poisoned his uncle, his wife's mother, his sister-in-law and a number of other people, at whose hands he had never received anything but kindness. I will not dwell on these facts, beyond remarking that Wainewright was—and is now recognised by all—as an artist: his prose delighted Charles Lamb, and his pictures are none too pale a reflection of Sir Thomas Lawrence's own. But what I insist upon is the singular point that art, in the person of Wainewright, also found its expression—and truly a masterful expression it was—in the most subtle shades of poisoning—which proves beyond a doubt that murder, in the hands of true artists, is quite as rich a material as marble, paper, or words.

Laurence : I admit you to have proved your case as to poisoning—but as to that only. Your only modern example, and the most illustrious of your historical ones, only refer to poison. Where is the art in the modern methods of doing away with human life ?

Cecil : My dear Laurence, I am glad I have been able to convince you of the truth of my proposition. . .

Laurence : Of your paradox.

Cecil : If you like : a paradox is but a truism, brilliantly clad. And now let me pursue my demonstration. First of all, you must observe that murder has never been so plentiful, in spite of Scripture, Religion, and morals, as it is nowadays.

Laurence : Really ? I should have thought that in the good old times you just now referred to, when the Borgias practised their . . . art. . . .

Cecil : You only look at the surface of things, Laurence. No, believe me, murder has never yet had such a wide scope for its activities—not even

in the bygone days of Nero or Caligula. As you yourself remarked, we have modern methods of dismissing human life : murder, like every other earthly thing, is a ceaseless evolution.

Laurence : But what do you call the "modern methods ? "

Cecil : That is precisely what I am coming to. First—though not foremost—I may mention colonisation. . . .

Laurence : My dear fellow ! Colonisation—murder ?

Cecil : Certainly. . . "A rose by any other name...."
Can you find a better one for the subtle art that brings the white man to the wilds of Africa, to destroy the indolent existence of fellow men, (although black) ? He laughs at their ignorance, derides their faith, plays havoc with their most cherished beliefs—and was wont to make use of their activity by converting them into slaves. This was immoral, of course ; so now he kills them. . . . My dear Laurence, I shudder whenever a foreigner denies the English an artistic sense : we have proved to the whole world that we have this particular branch of art much more highly developed than any other nation, excepting, perhaps, the Japanese.

Laurence : Have you any more of these 'modern' methods ?

Cecil : Certainly. I may mention war, though I do not wish to dwell too long on this subject, which has been too much talked of already. Of course war is as old as mankind, but no one can deny that the modern methods, and especially the modern weapons, have immeasurably added to its power, its horror, and its glow. These are three intrinsically artistic qualities : and anybody

with the faintest sense of art must acknowledge that the slaying of hundreds, or of thousands, in a flash of light, a roar, and a stroke, contains an extraordinary æsthetic thrill—as does the dropping of bombs from an airship, or the singular combat of two knights-errant of these days, astride on their aerial chargers. . . . But I will not develop this argument to its full length: you must have grasped its unanswerable force . . . Indeed, I often maintain that war only goes on existing, or menacing, because it appeals so violently to the primeval artistic instincts of man.

Laurence: Please continue, my dear Cecil, you quite overwhelm me.

Cecil: Next to these—may I say “ wholesale ” ?—methods, I would mention those practised by our bred-in-the-bone criminals, our social dregs, them whom our neighbours call “ apaches ” . . . Nay, do not start, Laurence: the apache, whatever the stench of his guilty conscience and unholy body, the apache is an artist at heart! M. Tristan Bernard has most ingeniously studied his psychology, although I fear he may have left out some very interesting possibilities: there are two fields of activity for the artistic cravings of his soul—love and murder. These generally are closely allied, as the keenly observed sketches of poor Charles-Louis Philippe, and of M. Charles Henry Hirsch prove without a doubt. . . . There is poetry, my dear Laurence, in the kiss a dastard apache imprints upon the lusty, rouge-besmeared lips of his wanton mistress, and there is poetry in the death-stroke he deals his unlucky rivals. Not only is there poetry, Laurence, but you must

feel as I do, that that kiss, that that blow, *are* poetry in themselves—of the same artistic value as the kisses Paris bestowed upon Helen, as the blows Pyrrhus struck the faithless son of Priam.

Laurence : You quite convince me, my dear fellow—but please go on.

Cecil : The medical profession, too, may be said to harbour a certain amount of artistic ability in the domain of murder. Molière and Lesage—to say nothing of Dickens—already recognised the possibilities of the calling, and Doctor Sangrado assuredly owes his success to the whimsical fantasy he tickles in us all. But in our own days, when every doctor is (at least, he will tell you so) a man of science, can you not feel the artistic thrill of administering an anæsthetic or of performing the simplest surgical operation, that of appendicitis, for instance ? Why, even the diagnosis of a case is replete with the subtle murmurings of art : to feel a man's pulse, to look at his eyes, to tap his chest—and to give a verdict of life or death (in most cases erroneous, of course) must give one the same superhuman thrill as doubtless the noble cardinal Ximenes felt when he held a victim's doom in the droop of his eyelids or the twist of his mouth . . .

Chemists, too, may introduce something of the same sensation into their otherwise monotonous calling—by giving strychnine instead of soda bicarbonate, for instance. . . . But this, of course, comes under a heading already discussed, and assented to by you.

Laurence : Oh ! I have, by now, quite come over to your opinion, my dear Cecil.

Cecil : In that case, it is perhaps useless for me to exhaust the number of instances I might otherwise furnish you with. Still, I cannot omit mentioning meat-packers as characteristically modern artists in the destruction of human life, and I am sure Mr. Upton Sinclair agrees with me in this respect. Practically all large manufacturers may be included in the same class, and a good many smaller ones—without forgetting most of our essentially modern business-men, financiers, engineers, inventors, sportsmen, jugglers and clowns of all descriptions. . . . And now let us go for a walk in the garden. I have talked too long, and must smoke a cigarette, whose wreaths of silver grey may catch the slanting rays of the fireless moon. . . . Come ! Let us watch her smile !

G. K. CHESTERTON

WHAT'S MADDENING ABOUT MAN

IF I am made to state abstractedly what good there is in man, I stop practically as soon as I begin, because very little remains to be stated after I have said "his ideals." And this is a thing everybody must agree upon, even Smith or Jones, who will probably reply that they have no ideals: the obvious retort to their argument is, of course, that they have no good in them. Now, there are two things, and two things only, that go to the composition of our human essence: good and evil. Lord Shufflegold would deduce that evil makes about nine-tenths of the average man. And he would be quite right. But Bishop Heartson would equally deduce that evil only constitutes one tenth of his human brethren. And he would be quite right too. This seeming contradiction is most easily bridged over if one will but remember that boundaries never divide: they unite. And this it is, precisely, that brings us to what is maddening about man: the fact that he has it in his power to conciliate good and evil, and in the vast majority of cases, resolutely refuses even to think of doing so.

It is not the negation of good that is evil, because, if there generally is one sort of good, there may be about a hundred million sorts of negation to it, only one of which is positively evil. We cannot call a thing a failure, simply because it has not been good. A burglar who fails in an attempt to break into a house has done no evil; yet who will say he therefore has done good? In the like manner, a saint who fails to convert a sinner has done no good; yet who would dream of saying he therefore has done evil? That is my point, though I have never tested the efficacy of not doing evil or of not doing good. What I mean is, that all men should make up their minds to *do* something—anything, be it burgling or converting sinners—instead of adopting the strictly negative (and usual) rule, of *not* doing something, whereby they believe to change this rollicking world of ours into something like a combination of sunday-school texts and rule-of-three. All men should decide to leave the filthy swamp of I'd-better-not, and revel in the delightful glades of Have-a-try.

Man may be defined ⁽¹⁾ as an ineradicable compound of harmless lunacy and savage virtue. Well, to get this many-sided and generally ignored business over, let it be said at once that the gravest defect in man is *not* his lunacy: he is not half lunatic enough. Surely no lunatic would allow thousands of fellow-creatures to remain without a roof, while hundreds of others are unemployed, while acres of building-plots go begging, and tons of timber and iron flit useless to the scrap-heap. But that is precisely what man does allow. Lunacy therefore is not half enough developed in man; it is his lunacy that puts him on to the track of doing things, but it is his savage

(1) He may be so defined, but on the other hand he may not. (Ed.)

virtue that strictly arrests him in the very nick of time, forbidding him to move his little finger, *lest he do evil*. That is the whole question in a nutshell.

What is common to all men is not their vulgarity, but their unwholesome fear of acting. The favourite occupation of a man, nowadays, would seem to loaf in a public square while some excited females attempt to mob a policeman; this negative spirit is merely the product of civilisation. The civilised man—that theoretical and utterly impossible blend of two incompatible things, civilisation and man—the civilised man is, of course, neither civilised nor a man. He is no longer a man, being content to become a sleeper—and he is not yet civilised, having only reached the state of laziness. Mr. Kipling tells the story of Ung, the artist of the stone age, who deceived his fellows into thinking he worked as hard as they; strictly speaking, however, this is an anachronism: Ung did not live in the stone-age. He lives in the XXth century, and his name is Lever, Lyons, Whistler or Lipton. It is this spirit of de-humanised and incomplete civilisation that prompts so many young men (who mostly call themselves “gentlemen’s sons,” thereby accentuating the difference between a gentleman and a gentleman’s son) to seek Government employment, or at least Government office. Now it is, of course, the characteristic prerogative of any Government to do nothing, or at any rate as little as possible. This is precisely the quality that appeals so strongly to our gentlemen’s sons, and urges them to leave the active and shameful life of a merchant or a squire, and to take up the void and brilliant career of a statesman or a statesman’s clerk.

Before setting forth the methods by which the rapid progress of what I shall call the non-acting

epidemic might be arrested, let me answer an objection which has several times been pitted against me. "Brown and Jones," you say, "seek—and ultimately find—Government employment. Well, after all, so did Milton and Sir Henry Rider Haggard." This is all very well as far as it goes, but I am afraid it does not go very far. ⁽¹⁾ Nobody defends madness on the grounds that Nietzsche and Maupassant went mad; no one admires murder as a career, for the showy reason that Benvenuto Cellini was a murderer. Milton, I contend, may have been a statesman—and so is Brown or Tomkinson; nevertheless, Brown or Tomkinson do not happen to be poets. As a matter of fact, no objection could be better chosen to prove *my* point, than one which gives a poet as an illustration. A poet is precisely a man who *does* (from the Greek *ποιέειν*, to do); a statesman, or for that matter, the average gentleman's son, is a man who *doesn't*.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," says a proverb. Now proverbs, of course, are mostly lies, and this one is no exception to the rule, at least in our times. Formerly, no doubt, the world was full of virtuous people who did their level best to sow the divine seed of good in the fertile garden of the Future. Nowadays, we only meet (besides hot-headed females trampling the blowing plants) sickly enthusiasts whose one and only care is that no seed of evil should be mixed with those already sown: not one of them thinks of watering the beds. The evident result is that all the good sown by our fathers dies in its growth, while no new seeds are sown for our children. The modern version of the proverb therefore ought to be: "Too much unto the day is the good thereof."

(1)—Certainly not in the case of Milton, but as far as South Africa with Sir H.R.H. (Ed.)

There are only two methods of living that are now conceivable : activity and laziness. When my tired friends have worked too hard (or when they believe they have worked too hard, which amounts to the same thing) they join the army of the Unemployed. When a man has been lazy sufficiently long he (sometimes) tries work by way of taking a change. Few, however, have realised that it is possible to combine these opposed principles of activity and laziness ; it is just this combination, in the appropriate proportion, which is called success. Preferring to do nothing is called (according to social position) loafing, idling, or being rich ; being unceasingly active is known as slaving, swatting or muddling ; it is only by taking the right percentage of both that a man may make his life successful.

The reasons for believing in success are probably as silly as those for any other human belief ; nevertheless, it is a thing the average man does believe in. When Jones rushes out of bed because his baby is driving him mad, he already sees his heir installed in all that delightful combination of luxury and happiness which we call success. Every boy, whatever the thickness of his skull and the blindness of his nature towards the future, dreams of himself as a pirate king, or a 'bus conductor, or a station-master, or a south-sea sailor, or a Klondyke treasure-seeker ;—his dreams are thousand-masked : the face beneath the mask is but one, the half-Janus face of success.

I frankly say, therefore, that success seems to be the fundamental aim of man's life—which is a very good thing in its way. But the maddening part of it is that the average man does not know what he means by success. For some it is a house in Mayfair, with a few country seats in Devonshire, Wales and Scotland ;

for others, it is a meal of fried fish and onions twice a day. The notion of success, let it be said at once, is not material; it is purely in his mental self that a man may be successful. That is the root of all evil: the average man is afraid to *do*, because he is afraid some action of his may spoil his "success." Whereas the truth is that only by *doing* may he satisfy his innermost craving for that "success" which no Vanderbilt, perhaps, may call his, while the poorest crossing-sweep may enjoy it.

W. W. JACOBS

THE YELLOW PIPE

"**I**NGRATITOOD," said the night-watchman, refilling his long clay pipe from the pouch I had handed over to him, "ingratitood's about the cheapest thing in the 'uman 'eart, an' I've met with a good deal of it in my time, too. There's some as'll tell you a feller never forgets a good turn; but my 'sprayience is just the reverse. I've 'ad friends, mind yer—I dessay I've 'ad more friends 'n any other man in my perfeshin; 'an what I 'aven't done 'em in the way of good turns ain't worth doin' any'ow. There's Peter Russet, f'r instance: a 'ole bloomin' summer, w'ile 'e was out of a job, I went an' used to stand 'im a pot at the "Boat-swain's Rest" every evenin'—yes, an' jolly 'ot it was, I remember. An' now Peter jus' cuts me in the street. 'Owever, that's neither 'ere nor there; w'at I wanted ter tell yer's quite another story. Maybe you remember a young chap as was often knockin' about—Nat Wilkins 'is name was, and 'e called 'isself a stevedore, although I never seed 'im do a stroke of work, mind yer. 'E was pretty flush of 'is cash, too, an' I can recollect 'im standin' me an' ole Sam Turner

an' Tom Barker an' a few other chaps a pint of ale at the "Admiral's Cabin." Well, one day 'e come up to me in the arternoon—sort o' quiet arternoon it was, an' I 'adn't nothin' hextra speshul to do, on account of a new policeman as was on 'is beat outside the wharf, an' kept a look-out as would 'ave been disgraceful to a respectable watchman like me.

"Good arternoon," 'e says, pleasant-like enough, twiddlin' 'is cane like a young fop outside a music-'all.

"'Ulloa," I answers, without letting 'im see 'ow pleased I was. "An' ow's trade ter-day? 'Ave yer sold any o' those patent dog-biscuits o' yourn, or some o' your 'eat-proof sardines?"

"Pretty fair," 'e calls back. "I say, though, 'ave you 'alf an hour to spare? I wish to consult you," 'e says, "on a matter o' some importance."

"Well," says I "it all depends. You know a watchman's job is to remain on the premises—an' if I was caught. . . ."

Next moment, though, I was wishin' as I'd never spoken a word.

"Look 'ere," says 'e, "I was thinkin' of a quiet gin an' bitters at the 'Admiral's Cabin'; but o' course, if yer duty compels yer to remain sweatin' in the sun, I can only congratulate your employer on 'is hexceptionally conscienshus staff" . . . An' a lot more 'igh-sounding words 'e let go at me—an' the thermometer about ninety in the shade. too. Disgustin,' I call it—an' all because I'd been fool enough to put in a word of caushun at the beginnin'. So I ups and says :

"If it's only 'alf an hour's job, I'm your man."

"Wot about that employer o' yourn?" 'e shouts back. "You don't seem so devoted to 'im as yer ought to be."

“ ‘Tain’t to be expected of a feller in my station,” says I. “ Besides, I’m a night-watchman—an’ I’m always ready to do a friend a good turn when I gets the hopportunity.”

“ W’ile all this talk ‘ad been going on, I’d got into my coat—I was in my shirt-sleeves on account of the ‘eat—an’ I was at ‘is side in ‘alf a jiffy. Well, ‘e went on jawin’ like that for at least five minutes, an’ I told the p’liceman to keep ‘is eyes extra-open for about ‘alf an hour—not that I ‘old with p’licemen, mind yer, as a general rule, but there is cases when a man’s obliged to change ‘is principles accordin’ to necessity, as the German Impror said w’en ‘e tried to collar Belgium.

We was quietly sitting in the saloon o’ the “ Admiral’s Cabin,” over a decent-sized glass o’ gin, when Nat Wilkins suddenly takes a beautiful leather case out of ‘is trousers pocket and puts it under my nose.

“ See that ? ” ‘e cries, as proud as a ‘en with a lot of new-‘atched chicks.

“ O’ course I see it,” I answers back, “ but w’at is it ? ”

“ You open it, an’ ‘ave a look. You never saw such a beauty, I’ll bet my hat.”

Well, I opens the case, an’ I’m blazed if it wasn’t a pipe. I’d been expectin’ a di’mond necklace, at least, by the looks of ‘im : but there, ‘tain’t no good ‘avin’ insight into the ‘uman characture wi’ some fellers—they allus manages ter disappoint yer in the end . . . Well, any’ow, ‘ere was Nat Wilkins an’ me lookin’ at the bloomin’ pipe, w’en I just catches the gaze of ‘Enery Walker speakin’ to the landlord in the taproom. ‘E also ‘appened to catch sight o’ me, an’ in ‘e comes, smilin’ like a ‘ot-cross bun : I allus appreciates true comradship when I sees it in a chap : that’s w’ere I kin respect ‘uman nature.

“ Good afternoon, Mr Wilkins,” ’e says, without so much as lookin’ at me.

“ Good afternoon,” answers Nat. “ Lucky thing, your just popping in: you an’ your friend ’ere ”—meanin’ me—“ might do a good stroke of business for me, an’ lose nothin’ by it, either.”

“ O’ course,” says ’Enery Walker. “ I don’t want nothin’ better . . . An’ a ’ot day it is, too, my doctor recommendin’ to keep my throat moistened—says it’s a real pan o’ sea, that.”

Nat Wilkins ordered some more drink, an’ ’Enery ’ad just about finished ’is straight off when the pipe was shown round once more for inspeckshun. ’Enery Walker was the first to open ’is mouth, a naterally large mouth ’e’s got, with rather a ’anging upper-lip. So ’e speaks out :

“ Wot’s it made of? Barley-sugar? ”

“ Yer not serious, Mr. Walker,” says Nat. Why, that’s a beautiful meerschaum pipe, bran’ new, and delicately coloured. You don’t find a pipe like that twice in a lifetime. Worth about ten pounds, a pipe like that.”

“ Ten pounds? ” I edjackerlated. “ Why, ’oo’s the bloke as is goin’ to give ten pounds for a smoke? If I ’ad ten pounds to spare, I’d sooner do somethin’ intelligent with the tin. . . .”

“ Yes,” put in ’Enery Walker, “ ’e’d come and spend it at a nice quiet place like this, with a pal or two like me to ’elp ’im—wouldn’t yer, Tom? ”

I glared at ’im then, seein’ as ’e might ’ave so much as passed the time o’ day with me when e’ came in, espeshully considerin’ as I was, so to speak, ’is ’ost. But ’e didnt’ seem to take no ’eed of my indignation, an’ went on jawing at Nat Wilkins.

The long an’ short of the matter was that ’e

proposed we should try an' sell the pipe; 'e even went so far as to drop 'is price to height pounds, an' offered us a commission of ten per cent—rather 'andsome, you may think it. I thought it was a good job too, but 'Enery Walker made no end of a fuss about the 'ole affair, sayin' 'e never 'oped to be able to get rid of the thing, 'aving no millionaire in 'is immediate surroundings—in spite of which, in the end, 'e took the pipe with 'im.

W'en I got back to my w'arf, the p'liceman 'ad disappeared, an' there was a suspishus-lookin' hindividoal trotting about the place, 'oo couldn't explain 'is business in anythin' like satisfactory terms. O' course, me not bein' a feller to create speshul difficulties, I just simply saw 'im back in the ferryman's boat, an' prepared for a bit of a nap—you see, it was quite dark by then, an' nothin' was likely to 'appen. As a matter of fact, nothin' did 'appen, which just shows 'ow useless it is to try an' be conscienshus with your employer.

The verry next mornin', just as I was sittin' down to a quiet breakfast, I 'eard a knockin' at my front door, an' before even I 'ad time to go an' see what was the matter, there was 'Enery Walker come rushin' in an' gaspin', like a feller as 'as taken leave of 'is senses.

"Wot d'yer mean," says I, "disturbin' a quiet chap like me at this time o' day? I need my rest, I do, after a sleepless night spent in the service of my employer."

"Never mind your rest," 'e blurts out. "The pipe as Nat Wilkins give us yesterday . . ."

"'Ere, old on," says I, "Nat didn't give *me* no pipe. *You* was the chap as took it."

"Well, any'ow, it's gone!"

"Gone!" I edjackerlates, all the blood rushin' out o' my face in a single instant. "You don't mean ter tell me yer've lost a tin-pound meerschaum pipe?"

"No, I ain't lost it, you bet," 'e answers back. "Some bloke must 'ave pinched it out o' the case. I thought perhaps you might 'ave collered it, for a practical joke"

"Practical joke be blowed!" says I, "I ain't a chap to do a silly turn like that. Anyway, there's ten pounds gone for yer, an' ten bob for me."

"Yer means four pounds eight for each on us, Tom," 'e shouts back. "Remember, 'e gave the thing to both of us, without naming anyone in speshul."

"Look 'ere," says I, "'oo d'you take me for? You go an' lose the bloomin' pipe, an' make me lose my commishun—an' you've got the cheek to talk of four pounds. Yer ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"It's no use kicking up a row, at all events," says 'e. "The thing is, wot's to be done? It's no use goin' up to Nat Wilkins an' sayin': 'Ere, we've been an' lost the bloomin' thing.' 'E'd make us fork out the tin, an' we'd be done, anyway. We've jolly well got ter put our 'eads together, an' find a way out o' the difficulty—find a helegant solooshun."

Now, yer see, I was young and inexperienced then, an' 'ad a brilliant idea. It was really no business of mine, considerin' I 'adn't been and lost the pipe. But I was gin'rous—allus ready to 'elp a friend in need—though I will say I was a bit lackin' in the knowledge of 'uman nature. So I puts my 'and on 'Enery Walker's knee, an' whispers:

"Why should yer tell 'im at all?"

"W'y," says 'e, "'e'll want either 'is pipe or 'is money—which I ain't prepared to give in any case."

“ You fool ! ” says I, “ ’oo said the pipe was stolen ? . . . That’s where my artfulness comes in. D’you remember, both of us took it for a hordinary clay pipe—you even thought it was made o’ barley-sugar. Well, w’y not get a yeller clay pipe o’ the same shape, an’ put it into the case ? ’Oo’l know the difference ? ”

“ Well, I’m blowed ! ” ’e put in. “ That’s wot I call a hextry top-hole miracle of hingeniousness. ’Ere, lend me sixpence, an’ I’ll get a noo pipe at the first tobacconist’s I come across.”

O’ course, you’ll say I was assoomin’ a hundue responsibility ; but as I said before, I allus was a chap to ’elp a pal out of a hole. So I gave ’im sixpence—although ’e’d not so much as said good arternoon to me the day before—which only shows ’ow ’eartless le was. Well, that’s neither ’ere nor there : at any rate, arter I give ’im the tin, ’e rushes out o’ my ’ouse, and leaves me to a cold breakfast—a dismal thing arter a night’s work.

Well, I lost sight o’ ’Enery Walker arter that ; some’ow ’e didn’t seem to come near me at all, though I ’eard from a pal or two as ’e appeared to be rather flush in cash, ’aving bought a new suit for ’isself an’ a bonnet for ’is wife ; ’oom I met one day lookin’ like a peacock as ’as found a noo feather in its tail. An’ about a week arterwards I ’ears the voice of Nat Wilkins outside my w’arf, yellin’ that loud, an’ swearin’ that wishus, it was ’orrible to ’ear.

“ Where’s that blamed night-watchman o’ yourn ? W’ere is ’e ? D’you ’ear ? I absolutely insist upon seein’ ’im ! ” I managed to make out from be’ind a pile o’ cases, ’cause I sort o’ naterally didn’t wish to come out an’ meet ’im just then. Luckily, the boy as answered ’im ’ad enough presence o’ mind to call out as I was hout just then. Arter ’e’d waited about

'alf an hour, 'e gave it up as a bad job, an' said 'e'd call again in the hevenin'. I let 'im call, an' managed to dodge that clever that 'e didn't get 'is sight o' me for a week at least, although, mind you, 'e came te see me four times a day, an' stood guard at our gates at least three hours. . . . In course, 'e didn't 'appen to know as there was another way out o' my w'arf round Jones and Robinson's back shed, an' straight through Lim'us Dock.

One day, however, I 'appened to be off my guard, 'an was henjoyin' a cosy little mug of ale at the "Lord Warden," w'en suddingly I 'ears a 'ear-splitting yell, an' first thing I remember arterwards was a sorter furious wild beast catchin' 'old o' my right shoulder.

"There 'e is at last," 'e went on 'owlin'. "Got yer at last, you whipper-snapper of a sneakin' thief! . . ." Fancy 'im callin' *me* a whipper-snapper! O' course it was 'im—Nat Wilkins—wilder'n I'd ever thought a 'uman bein' could be—which just shows the power of mental hillusion on a hunsteady mind.

"What' yer mean by hinsultin' a respectable workin' man?" I returns, as sharp as steel.

"You know very well what I mean," 'e shouts back. "Think I 'aven't seen through yer little game? Wot about my pipe—a beautiful an' rare meerschaum pipe?"

"Well, wot about it?" says I. "You gave it to 'Enery Walker to try to sell it—'e may 'ave sold it, for all I know."

"You lying skunk!" 'e roars at me, 'oldin' a pipe-case full in view. "You went an' changed it—kept my precious meerschaum pipe, and put this fourp'ny-'a-p'ny yeller clay one in its place! You thief!"

"Look 'ere," says I, warmin' up in the hargument, "you just mind wot you say. *You* don't call me names without gettin' a black heye."

Then 'e got wilder still, an' talked of the perlice, an' 'is lawyer, an' so on : but Bill 'Ooper, the publican, 'e pointed out to 'im as 'e couldn't prove nothin' agin' me, an' the colour 'is face went then was somethin' too dreadful heaven for a nightmare.

"I say," I called to 'im then, "wot d'yer mean by callin' me a thief, w'en you can't prove nothin' ? You're a slanderer, you are, tryin' to spoil my reputation." An' I ups an goes at 'im like mad—'cos' I can tell you I was pretty well excited too by now.

We 'ad a reg'lar good fight then : I remember 'e 'ad two black eyes, an' I knocked out one of 'is front teeth, w'ile 'e didn't do me much 'arm. An' in the end, 'e crept away without a single word, which goes to prove as a chap allus knows when 'e's beat.

I never seen 'im agin, o' course (*I saw to that*). But wot I wanted to say is this : as I never caught sight of 'Enery Walker neither—'im as made a tidy pot by collarin' the pipe, an' was mean enough to borrow sixpence from the pal as saved 'im, an' only needed fourpence—a'p'ny, too. Yes, that's the depths ingratitude may go in some 'uman 'earts."

A. CONAN DOYLE

THE FOOTPRINTS ON THE CEILING

Being an account of an adventure of Professor George E. Challenger, Lord John Roxton, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, M.D., and Mr. E. D. Malone.

WHEN, some years ago, I attempted to chronicle the stupendous adventure of our little group in the "Lost world" of South America, and, some time later, its still more amazing episode while the earth was passing through the "Poison Belt" of ether, I little thought it might be my lot to relate another marvellous occurrence some of us were to go through; and I feel it my duty to set it down at once, while most of the details are still fresh in my memory.

It was a warm day in June—the fourteenth, as I make out by an entry in my note-book—that the adventure may be said to begin. I had just come out of Mr. MacArdle's office; the kind-hearted old Scot was about to retire from the post he had occupied so long, that of news-editor to the *Daily Gazette*, to which (I say it in all modesty) the proprietors had decided to promote me. Old MacArdle had given me a few parting words of sound advice, and I was

still meditating his well-meant remarks while I sat down in my own little office, which I was to leave so soon. My brain was full of lingering thoughts of the past, mingling with vague plans for the future, when the office-boy came thundering in, bearing a visiting-card between his none too clean fingers.

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Malone," he cried, banging the door.

"Sure it's me he wants to see, and not Mr. Mac-Ardle?" I cautiously demanded, not wishing to be disturbed uselessly.

"He said Mr. Malone, sir," the boy assured me.

"Well, show him in," I said, looking at the card, which bore the printed inscription: Dr. Watson, below which I read, in a barely legible handwriting: *requests the favour of a few minutes' interview with Mr. Malone.* Here were the tables turned, indeed! I was all the more puzzled, as I knew nothing of this Dr. Watson. I was revolving in my mind the several doctors, and the many Watsons, with whom I was more or less acquainted, when the door opened again, and a plain-faced man—evidently a physician—was ushered in by the irrepressible office-boy.

"How do you do, Mr. Malone?" he said in a singularly oppressed-sounding voice, anxiety seeming to pierce through his open lips and sallow cheeks.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Watson," I rejoined. "What may I do for you? I am afraid you must have made a mistake, as . . ."

"I think not," he hastily interrupted. "I must ask you to excuse me, but you are *the* Mr. Malone, Professor Challenger's friend?"

"Indeed, I have the honour of his acquaintance," said I, "although friendship is, I fear, too presumptuous a word, on my part at least."

"Well, Mr. Malone," he continued, in gulping torrents of words, "I must intrude upon your time to the extent of asking you for an introduction to Professor Challenger's. It is a matter of life and death. I know the eminent scientist and his wife do not care to be interviewed by strangers, and that is the reason why I appeal to you."

"Indeed, Dr. Watson," I replied, "I doubt whether Professor Challenger would consent to see you at all, even if I were to introduce you to him."

"He is your friend—and what I ask is on behalf of a friend of mine, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, of whom you have doubtless heard."

"I must apologise for my ignorance," I replied. "However, I am quite willing to answer your urgent appeal to friendship—although I have very little confidence in my power to help. The best I can do would be, I suppose, to accompany you myself to Professor Challenger's: you might explain the matter to me on the way."

"Mr. Malone," he answered, heaving a deep sigh of relief, "I shall indeed be greatly indebted to you, if you can spare the time."

"Let me see," I mused, "there is a train from Victoria at . . ."

But he interrupted me at once.

"I have a 40-horse-power Humber waiting outside, which will take us to Rotherfield before we could get there by train. "

"Very well," I replied. "Pray excuse me a moment while I see my assistant, and I shall be quite ready for you."

I found Harper, my assistant, smoking his pipe in the passage, and hurriedly told him of my unexpected mission. After which, putting on my cap and coat,

and throwing a couple of rugs over my arm, I rejoined Dr. Watson and was conducted to his car, which a smart chauffeur set in motion at once, without even waiting for any direction from his master.

We had hardly set off, however, when I heard my name shouted by a voice I could not fail to recognise instantly, while I turned to gaze at a tall, thin figure, clad in a grey tweed shooting suit, that emerged from a motor-car just a few yards behind ours.

"Hullo, young fellah!" cried Lord John Roxton. Beside him was sitting another tall man, though he had nothing in common with his companion: silent and absorbed, he looked more like a human mummy than a living being, and the slow beating of the temples was the only sign of life he seemed to give. I was waving my hand in reply to Lord John when my companion suddenly sprang up in his turn, and, pointing towards the second car, cried out excitedly:

"What, Holmes! You don't mean to say you..."

"My dear Watson," calmly replied my friend's fellow-passenger, "since we are obviously bound for the same destination, I think we could no better than use the same car. Lord John," he continued, turning to his companion, "shall we join our friends? I am sure Dr. Watson's car will be more comfortable, and faster than our taxi."

"Right you are," said Lord John, "besides, the more, the merrier."

Accordingly both vehicles were stopped, Lord John paid his chauffeur, and the little party of four were soon seated in the capacious 40-H.-P., smoothly running southwards.

After a few exuberant remarks in Lord John Roxton's most characteristic manner, his companion,

looking keenly at me, began speaking in a marvellously even and passionless voice.

"Good day, Mr. Malone."

"Indeed, Holmes," interrupted his friend, "I am afraid I should have introduced you: pray excuse my carelessness . . . Though how you immediately hit on Mr. Malone's name—seeing you don't know him, and absolutely ignored what I was about to do—I really fail to see."

"Marvellous!" exclaimed Lord John, "most astonishing', I call it."

"It is the simplest thing imaginable," Holmes calmly proceeded, turning to me. "It is obvious you are a journalist: your pockets are crammed with note-books, and I see a Waterman peeping out of your waistcoat pocket; the second finger of your right hand is somewhat horny on the left side—an evident sign of active use of pen and pencil; there are a few inkstains on your coat sleeves—where, occasionally you dab your pen to rid it of any small encumbrance it may have caught; you are somewhat short-sighted—a sign of much reading or writing. Moreover, I see copies of the *Daily Gazette* protruding not only from your coat, but also between the rugs over your arm—which makes it quite evident that you are on the staff of that paper. Now I see you with my friend Watson, who is greatly concerned with the fate of Professor Challenger . . . Challenger has very few journalist friends; in fact, the only one is Mr. Malone: a child would deduce your identity."

"Absolutely rippin'!" exclaimed Lord John; while I was too much amazed for words.

"By the way," continued this remarkable man, turning to my companion, "let me congratulate you on your movements, my dear Watson. It was indeed

most thoughtful of you to enlist the services of Mr. Malone, who is one of the two only men now in England with the power of securing an introduction to Professor Challenger's. I was about to look him up myself at his office, when, by a lucky chance, I met Lord John Roxton, whom, of course, I instantly recognised from the description given in Mr. Malone's narratives."

"Yes," put in my friend, "extraordinary it was, too, seein' you had never even set eyes on me before."

"A simple instance of deduction, aided by memory," explained Sherlock Holmes.

Now, however, I turned to him and his friend, with questioning eyes.

"Perhaps," said I, "you could now explain the object of your mission; for I cannot conceal my astonishment."

"Right you are, young fellah," echoed Lord John. "Come now, gentlemen, will you kindly explain?"

"You have a perfect right to know everything," answered Dr. Watson, "and as we have some time before us, I think there is no reason whatever for withholding the explanation any longer. You must know, then, that Professor Challenger has disappeared."

The effect of this revelation was startling on both of us.

"What!" exclaimed Lord John, "a man of his size, disappearin' in the middle of a civilised country!"

"It is indeed incredible," I cried out.

"I received the news from his old chauffeur," Holmes said quietly, "and immediately started on my investigation. At the present moment I happen to know a few data concerning the case: for instance, the person whom I suspect of having absconded with

the professor is a small man, with blonde hair and long finger nails ; he must be in some great distress, and was formerly a creature of higher standard, now evidently fallen somewhat in the social and moral scale. I hope to lay my hands on him at no very future date, but in order to do so, I must examine Professor Challenger's abode with some care. That is why I set out to find you, Mr. Malone, little dreaming that I should first meet Lord John Roxton, and still less that my friend Dr. Watson would be simultaneously—and successfully—engaged on the same quest."

"Holmes," excitedly exclaimed Dr. Watson, "accustomed to your deductive methods as I am, I am quite overwhelmed by all this information about the unknown blackguard on whose track we all of us are now set! How on earth has it been possible for you to get at it? Have you discovered some new clue since I left you?"

"None whatever," calmly rejoined this remarkable man. "I know nothing more than you—we were together when the chauffeur rushed into my rooms in Baker Street, and related his master's strange disappearance."

"Why, dash it all," Lord John cried out, "it's clean marvellous!"

"Indeed," I hastily added, "you might do us the favour of explaining something of your process, Mr. Holmes."

"It is the simplest thing imaginable," he answered. "All the data were inferred from Austin's visit. You may recollect the man: of middle height, none too strong, though indubitably tough, and eminently impassive. From these characters, it is evident that the kidnapper is a small man. . . ."

"My dear Holmes!" ejaculated the doctor.

"Of course, my dear fellow," continued his friend. "If he had been tall and strong, or only of medium height and strength, he would certainly have seen to it that Austin be removed, and put out of the possibility of telling tales. Austin was left free: ergo the kidnapper is physically his inferior. The colour of his hair, and the abnormal length of his finger-nails, were immediately deduced by a casual glance at the cap Austin wore—it was not his own, as I at once remarked; you may recollect he said, in reply to one of my questions, it was one of his master's; well, the cap was strewn with long, fair, reddish hairs, and bore marks of tearing, which could only have been accomplished by finger-nails: I have studied the question in some detail; the technicalities may, of course, be found in my pamphlet on the subject—and I am perfectly sure of my conclusion."

"Rippin'!" exclaimed Lord John Roxton.

"But how could you deduce the moral and social part of your inference?" I asked, admiration for this deductive genius not yet quenching my thirst for his secrets.

"Equally simple, Mr. Malone," he answered, smiling. "First of all, it is quite clear no one would dream of absconding with a man like Professor Challenger if he could possibly do otherwise; hence the great distress. Moreover, the fact of kidnapping a man of such acknowledged genius points to a certain intellectual and moral standard: the common criminal would kidnap a millionaire, and hold him to ransom—but not a scientist: and last of all, our man has certainly fallen rather low in the moral and social scale, else he would visibly not have reverted to such extreme measures. . . . You see, it is all perfectly simple."

"You beat Euclid hollow," roared Lord John, "Don't you think so, young fellah?"

"As far as I can remember," I answered, smiling ruefully, "Euclid only deduces things that everybody knew already, or ought to know, whereas Mr. Holmes makes the whole invisible effect appear under the full limelight of the cause."

"Very neatly put, I'm sure," added Dr. Watson. "But here, unless I am mistaken, we are at our journey's end."

At some distance behind us, peering over a clipped hedge, was Professor Challenger's so unhospitable notice-board. We were passing between the posts of a gate, and at the end of a drive hedged in with rhododendron bushes, the familiar brick house peered smilingly at us—that is, at least at two of us.

Entering the house, we were met by little Mrs. Challenger, as dainty as ever, though her eyes were red with recent crying, and her whole face bore the marks of the anxiety and sorrow she had undergone. She came up to Lord John and myself, while a look of gratitude and hope passed, for an instant, across her careworn features.

"Oh, Lord John, and you, Mr. Malone!" she exclaimed in a voice bordering between tears and joy, "how kind of you to come to me in my distress! I would not have dared to trouble you myself, but I cannot express my relief at seeing you here."

"It's all right, my dear Mrs. Challenger," cheerfully replied Lord John Roxton. "Although Malone and I are little good, I'm afraid, we've brought you a rippin' friend in need, who'll find the Professor in half the time it'd take me to stalk a buffalo. . . . May I introduce you to Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and to Dr. Watson, his friend? . . . Gentlemen, Mrs. Challenger."

She shook hands gratefully with both of them, and was speaking some words of welcome to the latter, when I noticed that Holmes had disappeared. Dr. Watson immediately excused his friend's apparent impropriety, on the plea that he was already following some clue to the mystery. All three of us then followed her into the cosy boudoir where we had passed such memorable hours while the world was passing through the Poison Belt.

She had begun to relate her husband's strange disappearance, which had occurred on the preceding day. The professor had retired to his study after breakfast, as usual, and when Austin, as was his habit, knocked at the door to announce lunch, he had received no answer; the faithful chauffeur had finally entered the study, only to find himself in an empty room. His master had said nothing of leaving, or even of going out; indeed, nobody had left the house, through the door, at any rate. Having reached this point of her narrative, Mrs. Challenger broke down, and it was only by our combined efforts that she finally managed to recover her composure, though her eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Sherlock Holmes, keen and alert, burst into the room, walking straight up to Dr. Watson.

"Watson," he said in that calm and passionless voice of his, though it was easy to see he was tingling with excitement, "would you be so kind as to give me some information concerning Zeemann's phenomenon? I have, myself, dabbled somewhat in science, but I am afraid I have no recollection of this apparently recently-discovered notion, and I apply to you as to the scientist of our party."

"My dear Holmes," replied Watson, visibly dis-

appointed, "I'm sure I utterly fail to see what Zeemann's phenomenon has to do with your case. Indeed, I am afraid it is somewhat outside the range of a mere physician. Nevertheless, I may tell you broadly what it is. Zeemann was the first to discover that all the colours and lines revealed by spectral analysis are actually deviated by some influences—amongst others, by a strong magnetic field."

"Then I have it!" exclaimed Holmes, himself moved to some display of excitement his voice no longer suppressed.

"What?" Mrs. Challenger cried out, "you mean you have found. . ."

"Professor Challenger will be amongst us within a few minutes," he resumed, in tones once more void of any emotion. "Gentlemen, I request you to follow me into the scientist's study. Pray excuse us, Madam."

The four of us found ourselves in the familiar study, a look of amazement on the faces of all save Sherlock Holmes, who began in an even voice: "I must first of all confess that I was completely wrong about the results I told you of on the way here; I was completely misled by appearances, which only proves that one should never work on pre-conceived ideas. However, I am happy to say I discovered my mistake as soon as I entered this room."

"How on earth could the simple aspect of this room account for such a change?" muttered Dr. Watson, turning his puzzled face towards his friend.

"Look," replied Holmes, pointing first to the ceiling, and then to a mass of papers strewn about the scientist's desk. "The ceiling unquestionably bears footprints. . . . And these papers all contain

diagrams and rough jottings, where the words, "Zee-mann's phenomenon" ever recur. Here"—he pointed towards a little case attached to the wall, "is an electric switch commanding an electro-magnet in the laboratory (as the inscription says): you may notice the current is now *on*. On further investigation, I ascertained that the current consumed since the Company's last visit (which happens to have been yesterday) is no less than 2,000 Kwh. . . . The missing link in this remarkable chain of evidence was given me just now by Watson's explanation of Zee-mann's phenomenon—and now Professor Challenger will instantly return."

All three of us were too dumfounded to understand; what Sherlock Holmes called a chain of evidence was an inextricable labyrinth to me, and I was just about to set a question, when I saw him jump forward, and calmly switch off the electric current. Immediately the silence seemed intensified; we gazed spellbound at one another, and suddenly a massive form was visible, apparently dropping out of nowhere, in the region of the ceiling.

Holmes was the first to act. He sprang forth, and clutched at the apparition, from which a bellowing yell issued at the same time. I came nearer in my turn, and was able to make out a black beard, a huge head, with a broad forehead and a dark plaster of black hair, then two clear grey eyes, with their insolent eyelids—and suddenly I recognised the missing man. Holmes, lithe as a panther, caught him in his arms, and instantly set him on his feet.

"Hullo! What the devil do you mean? Now my young friend, what is all this?" How inexpressibly glad I was to hear the familiar voice!

"Why, Herr Professor!" cried out Lord John.

"Yes, himself," came Challenger's sonorous bass—and suddenly perceiving the two others, he went on: "And may I ask who these intruders are?"

"Dear Professor Challenger," I tried to calm him, "these gentlemen came here with Lord John and myself, and have just solved the mystery of your disappearance. . . ."

"My disappearance?" he vigorously interrupted. "How can I have disappeared, when I was simply trying a little experiment on Zeemann's phenomenon? Pray answer that, sir—yes, you, I mean!" And he turned savagely towards Sherlock Holmes.

Our remarkable friend calmly met his gaze; "May I ask you what day you make it out to be, Professor Challenger?" he enquired.

"What day?" bellowed the irate scientist. "Tell you what day it is? Yes, sir, I can: it is the 13th of June, and it also happens to be"—here he looked at his watch—"3.35 p.m."

"As a matter of fact," replied Holmes, "you happen to be wrong—which is only natural after your adventure: it is not the 13th, however, but the 14th; you have been absent from our planet for something over twenty-seven hours."

"Extraordinary!" muttered Lord John Roxton.

"Incredible!" I could not help exclaiming.

"Would you mind explaining your meaning, which appears somewhat blurred to my feeble intellect?" asked Challenger, taking up his thundering irony.

"Nothing is easier," said Sherlock Holmes. "Yesterday morning, you came into your study, and started experimenting about Zeemann's phenomenon. You switched the current into a hyper-powerful electro-magnet, evidently not thinking of the enormous amount of iron a human body of your dimensions

must contain—or of the tremendous effect the magnetic field might have upon the spectrum such a body would absorb. In short, Zeemann's phenomenon deviated that spectrum further than could have been expected—and you followed it, quite unconsciously, into space—or into ether. Those are the traces of your passage," he added, pointing to the footmarks on the ceiling. "It is quite simple, as you see, my dear Watson . . . And now, gentlemen, let us return to Mrs. Challenger."

W. J. LOCKE

THE HEART OF A BACHELOR

“**L**A VALEUR n’attend pas le nombre des années,” said the French poet. To Bob Chaynero, certainly, valour came before years, which is all the more remarkable in a gutter-snipe of his sort. For Bob was born and bred in the gutter; indeed, his habitual residence was Walker Court, a none too sweet-smelling abode in the immediate vicinity of Mile-End Road, Whitechapel; and that is precisely where I made his acquaintance. Now why should a man of my generally urbane temperament walk so far out of his habitual *milieu*, as to haunt purlieus of so unsavoury a description as Mile-End Road, and Walker Court? I am afraid that would be rather a long story: however, to be brief, I wanted to collect some “human” documents for a paper I was preparing for the “International Philanthropic Society,” of which I was the President; and, like many a better man, I had taken to slumming, thinking thereby to gain unfathomable knowledge of some of the innermost things of our passing souls—which was rather a pretty conceit. It was there, however, athirst for knowledge that

nothing save actual life may give, that I came across the quaintest figure imaginable ; a mere boy, perhaps ten years old, in the usual tattered garments that make the nondescript *attirail* of the ragamuffin—with something at once brilliant and arresting, however, in his general *allure*—the air of a beaten dog that thoroughly objects to being ill-treated, an unconscious defiance to Slumland and to Philistia alike in the blazing fire of his liquid eyes, and in the golden curls of his unkempt head.

He was not very tall, he was not very beautiful ; yet I smile as I recall to mind his heroic bearing to the face of a life that had visibly been the cruellest of step-mothers to him. As I remarked a moment ago, the pathetic braggadocio of the small figure had already arrested my attention, but the words that sprang to the lips immediately took refuge outside the commonplace.

"How much would it cost to go to Paris, sir ?" His eyes were staring at me, and the quality of the voice was musical as well as eager ; the question in itself was startling from such lips, and no trace of cockney accent was discernible about it—not even in the first word, in which the *h* was sounded as correctly as by an actor in the heyday of his fame.

I took some time to answer, but I managed it somehow. "I'm afraid it *does* cost a good deal of money. But how did you come to think of getting there ?"

Perhaps something in my voice inspired him with confidence ; he did not shrink away from me, as so many of his type would have done. . . . But then, who else, of his type, would have put such a question to the first decently-dressed man who happened to walk his way ? Fancy ? Pre-ordained sympathy ?

Coup de foudre? Who may tell the inner workings of a boy's heart, a thousand times more complex than any woman's, and hardly ever noticed, much less studied, in our days of marriage market and electric trains? Whatever the answer, the youthful ragamuffin had awakened a dormant chord within me, and doubtless its echo was still vibrating in a neat little casket of his nascent soul.

That is how we became friends, Bob Chaynero and I. Before I was half an hour older, I learned all about him: his name, the vile conduct of his parents, and—what proved vastly more interesting—how he had been taught the rudiments of speech by an old Frenchman who had taken a liking to the boy, and was now dead.

M. Lyonnais had been the old man's name; he had been, said Bob, a teacher of languages, as are so many of his compatriots stranded to our (to them) inhospitable shores. He spoke English like a foreigner, it seemed, but knew it well; besides, what matters the tongue when the heart speaks? And old M. Lyonnais' heart had spoken to the boy's, transplanting it out of the filth and ignorance it was born to know, right into the golden garden of romance, far into the brilliant realms of budding knowledge and flowering fancy.

Yes, such was my first meeting with Bob Chaynero; and, stolid Englishman though I was, I could not help my heart warming to the lad; I resolved to become the old man's successor—and at once felt thankful towards Providence for having given me a purpose in life. Till then, I had been a mere idle pedant, a podgy philosopher, whom some called dilettante, and others (more numerous, no doubt), fool; to such as me, bachelorhood had always

appeared a necessity, not from any inkling of misogyny, but from fear of the actual difficulties of wooing and winning a maid ; I had always been appalled at the thought of putting the fateful question ; the idea of choosing a house, of fitting it out, of calling on upholsterer, furniture dealer, and God alone knows *how* many other tradesmen, had been sufficient to keep me out of matrimony ; perhaps also I had never met the lady whom I was preordained, by Aphrodite's decree, to meet and love—in this world or the next. The finding of Bob was to me what is, to a lonely mother, the advent of her first child ; however, *my* child was already ten years old. I had little difficulty in persuading his lawful parents to leave his education in my hands ; a few sovereigns go a long way towards facilitating such arguments, and make them irresistible to the Mr. Chayneros of our world.

From that day I had a child, and Bob had a friend, who did not, perhaps, take the place of the one that had departed for ever—it will never appeal to me to enter a dead man's shoes—but strove to do his best towards the lad. I was amazed at his knowledge, and still more at his taste ; he certainly remembered more about most subjects than the average gentleman's son of his age—let alone street urchins ; and fled with horror from the glaring chromotint to the dainty copperprint, unlike what any of his class would have done. In music, too, his choice was cultivated ; I would have no one believe that I am an instrumentist of any skill, yet I do manage, with some luck, to express, at least, part of the composer's meaning, when my hands travel idly over the keys of my Broadwood ; ragtime, let me say it frankly, appeals very little to my taste, and I was surprised (and delighted beyond

words) when I saw Bob nestle close to me while I was rendering Rachmaninoff's beautiful serenade.

This delicacy of senses I strove to educate in him, perhaps a little sad at heart, when all was said and done, at not being the one to initiate him to truth and beauty—yet proud withal at being chosen by Fate to pursue what had been so marvellously begun. Sometimes I surprised myself longing to meet my predecessor, the old Frenchman, who had probably died of despair and poverty in the loathsome surroundings of Mile-End Road. And one day, I unearthed the reason of my ward's remarkable question; he had often asked me about Paris, without condescending to unravel the mystery of his curiosity. No doubt I happened to touch a sensitive chord in his vibrating soul. Instantly he responded. Bob had been entrusted by his old master with a mission of love: the poor old man had made him promise to go to Paris as soon as he could, in order to call upon Lyonnais' sister, who was, it appeared, much younger than he. Bob had always kept his mission within call of his memory. He knew the address, 16, Rue du Cherche-Midi. He showed me, with a glow of triumph in his eyes, the vast sum of one pound, two shillings and ninepence halfpenny, which he had collected towards the journey. His hoarding had begun, I am sure, by a farthing at a time, and but for the happy chance of our meeting, I am afraid it would still have been far below anything worth mentioning. . . .

"Bob," I said, "to-day week, we shall be in Paris."

I saw two tears swell into his eyes, and trickle slowly down his cheeks. What matter tears when the heart is overflowing? After he had cried a little, after the manner of children and women, he became

still more confidential. His face was radiantly beautiful as he told me the name of his old protector's sister—Nicole it was—a quaint, old-fashioned, girlish name, rich with lingering echoes of Villon and Ronsard, and smiling memories of mischievous eyes among rose arbours . . . How old would she be now? I could but conjecture, of course; Bob always referred to his late friend, as "old M. Lyonnais"; a Frenchman who has come over to England as a teacher of languages, and failed in the attempt—Mile End Road meant failure—may die at any age, of course, but he must be pretty far gone in years not to make a last attempt to lay his aching bones in his own dear country, especially when he has a sister there. So I formed a mental picture of Mlle. Nicole: I saw a wizened *petite vieille* who would beckon us from the threshold of her little *logement* on the sixth floor of a dingy house, a quiet old maid, with a white cotton bonnet round her crumpled chin and grey hair . . . Well, in another week I would see her in the flesh, and Bob might at least be easy in his mind about that last promise of his.

* * * * *

Of the journey itself, of Bob's wonder at the (to him) tremendously long drive from Charing Cross to Dover, of his delight at the sea passage (the Channel was really, as a hearty sailor put it, a duck pond), and his excited cries on setting foot on French soil and in a French train, I shall say nothing, beyond mentioning them. Used as he was to crowds of all description, he could not help his bewildered expression as we at last scrambled out on to the platform of the Gare du Nord, in the bustle and haste of a great Paris

terminus, compared to which even those of London bear quite a mild and tame aspect. We drove to a quiet hotel in the little Rue des Beaux-Arts, where I am always welcome on my flying visits.

I love Paris; I love to lose my golden moments amid its grey walls and smiling gardens—just as other cranky old gentlemen love to lose their umbrellas. Further, I took in at a glance that Bob was delighted and awed at the same time. Does not the realisation always come as a stunning blow after the dream? And yet, who is ever so completely sophisticated as to be content with the dream? Certainly not Bob Chaynero—and no more am I, thank God.

The next morning we spent, after a delightful early breakfast—do you remember those luxurious “*croissants*” that melt on the palate, just as the voice of a divine singer melts on the soul?—among the sunny arbours of the Luxembourg, whose eternal youth smiles on the dwindling centuries. Bob felt the charm of the quaint elegance, so distant from anything he had ever seen before, and it was in this transfigured atmosphere of the soul that we traced our steps, in the afternoon, to the old Rue du Cherche-Midi. The street is a narrow, old-fashioned thoroughfare, still preserving its aged sculptured porticos and some of its gabled roofs, and number 16 turned out to be one of the oldest-looking houses among its brethren. A ferocious-eyed *concierge* told us, with unexpected courtesy, that Mademoiselle Lyonnais lived on the second storey of the front stairs. Thither we went, and Bob himself rang the bell, while I could not help noticing the tremor that passed all over his body.

There came a light patter of feet, the door opened, and I saw a youthful face smiling on us.

“*Monsieur demande . . . ?*”

"*Mademoiselle Nicole Lyonnais habite bien ici ?*" came my cautious answer, in a French that was not, I am afraid, flawless.

"*Oui, Monsieur—c'est moi-même . . . Donnez-vous la peine d'entrer.*"

Shade of Penelope, here was a shock! Mlle. Nicole was quite a girl, certainly less than thirty; moreover, she was very pretty, and her smile would have melted an iceberg (to say nothing of a hardened bachelor). Bob, of course, was less surprised: to him a girl of twenty-five would appear quite old; his eyes, however, told their own tale, and I knew he would get on very well with Mlle. Nicole.

She showed us into a cosy little salon, in which no trace of want could be detected. I confess I was exceedingly embarrassed; our hostess added to my confusion by her next remark.

"You must let me give your little boy a bonbon," she said lightly, producing a box of pralines which she enticingly held up to Bob's eager eyes.

"I . . . er . . . I am afraid he is not my little boy," I hastened to add, "though I always do my best to consider him as such." And I plunged head-long into explanations, which ended (after a considerable length) by my mentioning the existence of M. Lyonnais.

Two tears pearled on her deep grey eyes. "What!" she exclaimed, "Henri is in London after all! I believed him to be in Amazonia. He went away when I was quite a little girl—he was my elder by twenty years. . . . and I never dreamt him to be so near. But I must go to him at once: you will tell him, won't you?"

I was forced into giving further explanations, more involved and more painful than the others. Her

brother was evidently a demi-god to Mlle. Nicole, and the news of his misery and death (for I could not withhold them any longer) made more tears rush to her passionate eyes. I did my best to deal out the bad news as gently as possible, after the way you read (in books) of elderly gentlemen behaving to young girls.

To say I failed in the attempt is merely to express a truism; nevertheless, my attitude, at any rate, convinced our hostess of the sincerity of my sympathy, and I felt she did not resent my patting her hand in a fatherly way, while Bob (youth permits these things, alas, when age forbids them!) resolutely clasped his small arms round her pretty neck, and kissed her.

When the tears stopped, and the sobs began to calm, Nicole became a little more confidential. Now, a young girl's confidences are full of details, but she generally manages to leave out the important ones. With some interpolations, however, I succeeded in securing her story, which was, after all, quite *banal* in its simplicity: she had been left an orphan at the tender age of five; her brother, Henri, who had just completed a brilliant course of studies at the *Ecole des Mines*, finding himself penniless with a baby to support, had no choice but to accept a situation far out in Brazil, at Bacabal, in the heart of Amazonia, where some copper and tin mines had been located; by so doing he transgressed the French military law, and forfeited his right to come back to France for a long term of years; yet how could he do otherwise? The child he left in Paris, under the custody of an old servant (who had died when Nicole reached the age of twenty-two) to whom he forwarded quarterly drafts to minister to their small wants. How Lyon-nais had fallen from his comparative eminence at

Bacabal to the depths of Mile End Road, will ever remain a mystery to me, Bob being, of course, unable to shed any light upon it. Be it as it may, Lyonnais continued to provide his sister with modest sums of money, which decreased as time went on ; they were always sent from Amazonia, however, and he never dropped a hint as to his present surroundings. The girl had managed to make both ends meet, thanks to rigid economy (at the outset) and to her being able to give a few odd lessons (she was a fairly good English and German scholar) which kept her in comparative luxury. Then, some time ago, she had ceased to receive any news of her brother ; and Bob had been the unexpected means of making her acquainted with the reason of his silence.

* * * * *

Our stay in Paris proved to be longer than I had intended before setting out ; who can foretell his actions even a week beforehand, except he be one of your pragmatic human machines, that have time neither for the unexpected nor for the pleasant, and whose every thought stops short at the hated word " utility " ? Our stay in Paris was in no way useful, nay, but it was divine—or rather, it was just human, with that delicious mingling of budding happiness, present pleasure, and far-off unreclaimable sorrow that alone makes our life worth living. Of course, I often went to see Mlle. Nicole, and Bob grew her special favourite. Perhaps it was this common sympathy that was the initial delinquent—perhaps the little god would have pierced me otherwise with his burning shafts ; the cause I know not ; but my aversion to bachelorhood seemed to dwindle daily under Mlle. Nicole's deep

grey eyes, as a long preserved snowflake melts under the rays of April sunshine. In former days I would not have dreamt of doing some of the silly things I became guilty of : I, the book-worm, the pedant, the solitary owl, might be seen taking a smiling girl and a boy in knickerbockers on the penny steamers to Saint-Cloud, and the delightful haunts of Meudon, wild as the wildest "rapin," full of a bohemianism that was all the more bohemian, no doubt, because it had been so long pent up. . . .

After all, why should I go on ? My delicious dream, which began so unexpectedly in the Rue du Cherche-Midi, will cease no more while God keeps my breath on this earth ; I am writing this amid the roses of my Surrey country-house (Eden could have been no different) ; Nicole, my wife, is calling me in to tea, while her loving eyes hover from a twelve-year-old boy sitting near me, to a dimpled baby screaming with laughter in his arms.

H. G. WELLS

THE FINDING OF LAURA

CHAPTER I

THE NEW PLANET

§ 1

OF course, it is all very obvious and quite natural to us who live in the 22nd century, but to the primitive men and women who existed about 2050, over a hundred years ago, the whole thing bordered on the marvellous—that obsolescent realm of fuzzy-headed ignorance and fungoid growth of erroneous learning.

That would be just about the time that Ferrers had created his first model of hyper-atomic motor, bringing the long and laborious researches of Lesage, Tomkins, and Guglielmo to a sound, if unexpected, conclusion. The presumptuous men of those early days would, of course, be inordinately proud of a machine that gave them about six million H.P. to the gramme ; (it is useful to remember that the first motor founded on atomic dispersion barely gave a

thousandth part of that, and yet our distant ancestors went clean head over heels with joy at the thought of possessing what was, to them, such a condensed form of energy). Zuccolo, I believe, was the first to make use of the Ferrers motor for any really original purpose, and he constructed an antiquated species of self-propelling sphere, that just managed to defeat the acceleration of gravity in the atmosphere of the earth, pursued its puny course through ether, and was eventually attracted by the power of gravity towards some other celestial globe. . . . But this bold outline of facts is by now known to everyone with the slightest taste for historical erudition, and I need not dwell upon it further than by mentioning that Harvey and Jones were the first two Telluric men who set foot on another globe than theirs, the former on the moon, the latter on Mars. . . .

§ II

Little by little, our ancestors discovered the less near planets, and even ventured to some of the most visible stars. It is difficult for us to comprehend the extraordinary enthusiasm that our grandfathers evidenced for the exploration of the cosmic bodies ; now that we have a thrice daily service from our North Pole to the Equator of Neptune (with restaurant accommodation), such nonsensical emotion seems altogether out of place. But let us not forget that we are looking at the past from the angle of the present times ; if we try to focus our spiritual lens at the correct distance of time, all these things become clearer.

Little by little, as I remarked, all the globes become known to our race—not without difficulty, of course, on account of the feeble speed that could be extracted

from the Ferrers-Zuccolo shooting sphere. Those were the days of compressed oxygen, and albumin-tabloids . . . Still, our ancestors mastered most of the planets, including Uranus and Neptune, and their satellites ; one audacious man of those days (I forget his name for the moment) was even so fortunate (aided by a happy fluke in ethereal trade-vibrations) as to drop clean on to Sirius.

§ III

Then it was that H. G. Laurence, F.T.S.S.—(those were the opening days of the Telluric Science Society) made his discovery of a new planet. He founded his calculations on the perturbations of Uranus, and was rewarded just as his erstwhile predecessor Leverrier (a now forgotten astronomer, who flourished in the 19th century) had been—with the exact co-ordinates of his perturbing body. All the observatories were turned toward the spot located by Laurence, and, sure enough, at the appointed hour, there appeared the newcomer in our little collection of planets.—I say “ at the appointed hour ”—but that is not strictly correct, the new planet, as a matter of fact, putting in its appearance about seven minutes later than the scheduled time. The fact was overlooked, of course, and simply put down to a slight error in Laurence’s computations, though he always maintained them to be strictly accurate. Anyway, his planet was named Laura, and he was immensely proud of his discovery, and full of a spirit of benevolent waggery towards anyone who had appeared to doubt his assertions. He was elected P.T.S.S. for ten years, because his achievement was considered to be quite the highest thing that could possibly be done in that period of

time, and he was awarded the first solid helium medal the Telluric Science Society ever gave any of its members.

Of course, Laurence had not only calculated the co-ordinates of his planet for a given time, but he had also computed its distance, diameter, specific weight, age, chemical constitution, and so on. There seemed to be nothing ostensibly remarkable or irrationally novel in all these figures—beyond the fact that its average distance from the Earth was something over double that of Neptune.

§ IV

There was something tragically humorous in the endeavours made to explore Laura, as all the other planets had been explored. Of course, the distance was great (for the time: remember all that is more than a hundred years ago), but the fact of Sirius having been reached laid aside *that* objection before it was even formulated.

All the keenest cosmic explorers of the day set out, in what was then the latest cry of Ferrers-Zuccolo shooting spheres; men like Gerald Brown and Léon Lambert, the most foolhardy and enterprising of their kind, made attempt on attempt. Some of them even took Neptune as a secondary starting point; some tried Uranus instead, as nearer the new planet's latest position; they perfected their motors, and dropped every milligramme of superfluous weight; but it remains a fact that they never reached the planet Laura. Somehow, when they got within anything like reasonable distance of it, they regularly had a break-down in their motors, or some petty disturbance stopped their further advance; one of these would-be

explorers even goes the length of saying that he was beginning to see the mountains and lakes on Laura's surface (through his wireless optoscope, of course), when a gust of swelling ether forced him back again, and he had to take refuge on one of the secondary satellites of Jupiter.

And just at the same time there began to be greater errors in the locating of the new planet. It became more and more in advance over its scheduled time, and the fact, of course, drew attention to the initial seven minutes lateness when it had first been discovered. And then, suddenly, it seemed to disappear: however sharp the observatories proved themselves to be, Laura was sharper still, as if it took pleasure in mocking both the astronomers and the explorers.

Everybody felt the keenest interest in the mystery, and Laurence himself was clean baffled by it. He did all his calculations over and over again, and had them looked through by his most eminent colleagues; but they found no trace of an error—and Laura continued to be as unfindable and unapproachable as ever.

CHAPTER II

THE COUNTER-GRAVITY

§ I

It will be remembered Green's anti-gravity screen was discovered in the opening months of 2051. The principle of the apparatus was not unlike Faraday's classical electric screen (Faraday was a primitive 19th century scientist, now hardly remembered, but fairly well known in his day); by means of a wire netting through which an alternative electro-telluric current was switched on and off, the effects of gravity were more or less completely counterbalanced—sufficiently so, at all events, for the men of those days to be quite proud of the discovery. Of course, they had not yet mastered the correct nature of the force of gravity, and still clung to Newton's obsolete views on the subject.

With the aid of Green's rudimentary apparatus, it at all events became possible to experiment upon what were then new and undreamt-of sensations. Non-gravity aviation became an everyday matter, and travel over the surface of the earth mere child's play. The idea was, of course, for the aviator to

ascend to some distance from terra-firma (any distance, though greater than the altitude of the highest mountains), and then to switch on his Green anti-gravity screen. When, in the course of its customary rotation, the earth had turned beneath him so as to present him with a view of his destination, he switched off the screen, and suffered gravity to put him down where he wanted to go. There was hardly any expenditure of energy, and the entire process was so gluckingly simple, that it always remains a mystery that it had not been thought of earlier.

But it is hardly useful dwelling on so well-known a subject.

§ II

Of course everyone still remembers the sensation that arose from the flights of R. W. Rugban. He was a simple bottle-washer in Green's laboratory, and a man without any special scientific culture. Nevertheless, it is to a lucky freak of his that the men of those days owed the clearing up of the mystery that flocculated around the planet Laura.

Rugban conceived the idea of adapting an anti-gravity screen to one of the Ferrers-Zuccolo shooting spheres, the hyper-atomic motor producing the electro-telluric current necessary to the mechanism of the screen. There was no ultimate motive about this idea of the bottle-washer's—it was simply one of those lucky flukes without which all the genius of our greatest scientists can produce but rudimentary results, without attaining objective certainty.

Naturally, the adapting of the Green screen to the shooting sphere entailed no gain of motive power, the expenditure in electro-telluric current being far

greater than the gain due to the annihilation of gravity near our planet. That is probably why no scientific man had thought of the combination. But the fact remains that Rugban actually landed on Laura on his fourteenth flight.

He proved his assertion beyond the shadow of a doubt, by bringing back with him a fragment of Laura soil—which contained the (then) unknown body of Laurium, characterised by Laurence's statement, and located in Laura's spectrum, while the planet had been visible. Further, he was able to give the accurate distances between Laura, Uranus and the Earth, and the observatories were thus enabled to hit upon the mysterious planet once more. That, however, was not for any considerable length of time. Laura still kept ahead of its computed position, and it was at last ascertained that its trajectory could not possibly be the one Laurence had assigned it, in accordance with all the astronomical laws then known.

§ III

The revelation came with Rugban's fifteenth flight, when he set foot on Laura for the second time, and triumphantly brought back one of the inhabitants of the elusive planet. It was a curiously shaped creature, with three legs and five arms, a head of sorts, and a body not unlike those that populate the smaller satellites of Neptune. The curious and salient fact about the Luran, however, was that it insisted on standing *on its hands*, that were provided with a species of vacuum-sucking-knobs, and thus got so firm a grip of everything it was put upon that it became well-nigh impossible to move it. The Luran explained by signs how anxious it was not to be shot

out of the terrestrial atmosphere, and when Rugban started the anti-gravity screen above the creature's feet, it began to quake and shiver with terror. It calmed down as soon as the current was switched off, and again lost itself in voluble, if incomprehensible, explanations.

They tried to grasp the meaning of the Lauran's torrent of words, but it was impossible to make anything of them without the help of a proper interpreter. Green called Lug-Hsn, the ex-Neptune native, who seemed to catch the gist of what was being said. And then the explanation came, perfectly simple and convincing.

On the planet Laura, said the new-brought creature, *weight was a negative force*, everything was attracted *into space*, away from the planet's atmosphere. Of course, all the living species had to be provided with vacuum-sucking-knobs in order to remain on the planet at all—and that was why the Lauran had been so frenzied lest he should lose hold of the Earth. The law of inverse ratio to the square of the distance had been proved to exist by the Lauran scientists, but this was a centrifugal, and not centripetal, force, on their planet.

§ IV

Naturally, the whole aspect of the case was completely changed; Laurence immediately resumed his computations, founding them upon a change of sign in his equations. It was child's play to deduce the true trajectory of the new planet—a hyperbola, of course, instead of the customary ellipse. It had been an astounding stroke of good luck that Laura had been discovered at all; it was just in the region of the

curve's centre when Laurence had made his sensational discovery ; but now it was already speeding through ether along one of its asymptotic branches.

Laura became the converging focus of all the observatories once more, and they were able to trace its flight nearer and nearer its located asymptote, till at last its distance became greater than the power of even the greatest equatorials then existing, and the new planet disappeared for ever from our field of vision. . . .

THE AUTHOR OF " ELIZABETH AND HER GERMAN
GARDEN "

SUSAN AND HER GERMAN SAUSAGE

FEBRUARY 32nd.—I love my kitchen. I am standing in it just now—a kitchen so enticing that merely to glance at it makes you wish to remain there for ever and ever. There is an enormous fireplace on one side, with a row of steaming sauce-pans gently floating their warm fragrance, as, I suppose, good and pure souls exhale some of their goodness on all surrounding dreary or sordid ones. It has three solid oak tables, so much alike in their every detail, that it would be impossible to tell one from another, if they were not set in different places along the wall, so that you are bound to note exactly where they stand. I have given them names, so that I may know exactly where everything is : I remember I put the pink tray on the January table and the salt-cellar on the March table, while the August table is reserved for the sausage-machine. It seems rather natural that the sausage-machine should be put on the August table ; it is a sort of poetic justice that induced me to do so, and I feel the satisfaction of duty done. Not that I always do my duty : it is

sometimes so disagreeable that I just long to tread the smiling fields of Pleasure, right into the pleasant worlds of Whim, where I wander happily, plucking now and then a flower of Surprise, and breathing the luxurious fragrance of Forbidden Things. I know I should not lose sight of the tedious path of Duty ; but then, who does not ? And why has Duty chosen such a narrow and thorny way ? If it really wanted everybody to walk along it, why couldn't it turn itself into a beautiful highroad, shaded with sprightly elms and respectable poplars—a road along it which it could expect people to set forth without longing to leave it at every moment ? But I suppose all these things are explained in text-books, and that is just the reason why I never read any, because I like mysteries to remain mysterious ; I can't understand all the clever people cudgelling their brains—it does seem rather a pity to cudgel even brains—in order to explain things, or to pass them over as unimportant—preferably, I think, to pass them over as unimportant—when it would be so easy just to leave them alone. Whenever I feel like wishing to explain anything, I have found my best way out of the difficulty is to turn reposefully to my August table, and coax a yard of sausages out of the patient and friendly machine.

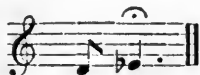
It is really more an instrument of art than a mere culinary tool. It has a shining nickel-plated paunch, into which I love pressing pieces of cold joint, and its handle is just the dearest little handle you can imagine. You turn it round just like the Italian round the corner turns his organ ; but my sausage-machine has the great advantage of being soundless,—at least, when it is well oiled and all in order. Sometimes there seems to be something wrong with its works, and it insists on emitting a series of strange noises, like the

mewing of a new kitten. But, after all, what do sounds matter? Sounds, I have been told are but the vibrations of the air around us, and it's simply no use trying to get away from them. I can understand dodging things like being wet or falling in a temper, because they are localised and fleeting; but it seems so utterly useless trying to run away from a vibration; why, the more you run away from it, of course, the more it insists on following you, and every place is full of mischievous echoes that simply drop into your ears. You might, of course, try stopping them with cotton-wool, but that looks so ugly that I've never had the courage to do so. And, besides, noise does no harm; you can listen for a sound, and listen, and listen, without ever growing tired of it, without being a whit the worse for it, while so many other things one generally doesn't think of avoiding—things like red-hot poker, or knives, or needles—are harmful to an extent that amazes me to think of.

The noise made by my sausage-machine when I have forgotten to clean it out chimes in beautifully with the groaning of the large kitchen clock in the corner. The sausage-machine says:



and the clock answers back:



in a solemn bass voice that brings out the charming melody of the treble. They do it over and over again, and I am quite sure it must be some profound truth they are doing their best to tell me, but I am frightfully sorry I can't understand their language.

Languages are so important things that I often wonder why each of us doesn't invent one for his own, special, private use, instead of being obliged to bow to what so many people have put down as the law. Those that astonish me especially are the clever people who know several of them—languages, I mean ; —and I often wonder why they should have taken the trouble of learning such a lot of funny sounds that must go on mixing themselves up in their heads till they can't know what they mean or what they say. I suppose it is my own superfluous amount of inability to learn anything that makes me pity the linguists ; but pity them I certainly do, and I simply cannot feel a spark of admiration for a man because he happens to know a thing I don't want to learn. And that is, I suppose, the true spirit of Christian modesty, for I don't gaze with envy on my neighbour's language.

January 46th.—I made at least three yards of sausage this morning, and feel perfectly virtuous about them—the more so, as I like them, and shall enjoy them at dinner this evening. They are pink and soft and greasy, rather like Evil, I am afraid—though most of the Moralists always insist on depicting Evil as black and rigid. But then, what can the Moralists know of Evil? If they had anything like an intimate acquaintance with it (or should it be with her?) they would be Moralists no longer, but Immoralists, I suppose ; and no one who has not simply wallowed in sin can appreciate the ecstasy of doing so. It is an astonishment to me that so few people seem to think any good of Evil, and hardly any at all dare speak in her favour ; which must be attributed, I submit, to the fear they live in of other people knowing them as they really are. What one

really is, one would ever keep to oneself ; at least, most of us would ; and I suppose we must appear very ugly indeed to our own eyes, that we should always insist on wearing a mask. The mask we wear is what the world calls our individuality ; sometimes it is bright and smiling, sometimes wan and melancholy, as often as not it is turned into a leering grin ; but, however repulsive it may be, we seem to prefer it to our own complexion. Of course, sometimes the mask is but an unduly thick coat of rouge and poudre-de-riz, and I am inclined to think the complexion, in this case, must be exceptionally distasteful.

And yet, when I meditate on things generally—and my kitchen provides me with plenty of quiet hours for meditating—I can't help thinking how much simpler it would be for everybody to throw over the mask-wearing habit, As no one appears to be deceived by it, it wouldn't really change anything at all, but it would simplify matters exceedingly—especially matters relating to toilet and etiquette. The only losers thereby would be the people who advertise in magazines for somebody or other's Beauty Restorer, or for Mrs. So-and-So's Newest Library of Deportment. And *that* really wouldn't matter a great deal, because all those people could easily set about doing something else—making sausages, for instance—which would be a great advantage to all concerned : they would easily get over it ; people do.

The cook gave me notice to-day, because of an indigestion she says she suffered from last night. That's the worst of cooks : either they can't cook at all, and you have to send them away, or they can, and they give you notice for some reason or other. On the whole, I don't know whether I don't prefer the former variety, because it is always easier to make

shift with a cook, even though she be a bad one, than with no one at all. Still, I hope my present one will reconsider her decision—which she may very well do after dinner, as she belongs to the latter class, and I had much trouble inducing her to come at all. She is an able cook, as I just remarked, but she appears to like putting things out of their places. She always *will* put the pink tray on the March table, and believes the January table would be utterly unhappy were it not to bear the salt-cellar; as to my sausage-machine, I never let her touch it, so I am sure, at all events, that it always remains augustly settled on the August table. I like to see to it that things are always put away where they belong to, and seeing to it makes me feel like an empress in the middle of her Council (if empresses do hold Councils). He misses much who doesn't delight in ordering things to behave properly, for things, like men, are addicted to the pernicious habit of getting out of order and generally making messes of themselves. Of course, everybody knows that a piece of bread and butter, if dropped on the floor, will always fall butter downwards, especially if the floor happens to be dusty; also if you sharpen your pencil when in a hurry, you are sure to break off the point and cut your finger. It is a knack things possess, but, like most other knacks, it is possible to get the better of them; in the former case, the simple remedy is, of course, not to eat butter, and in the latter, never, under whatever circumstances, to use a pencil.

Only the other day I reaped a complete victory (I don't know whether victories are really ever "reaped": certainly nobody ever sows them) over a pair of tongs that were inordinately vicious. They simply refused to pinch anything: whenever you

tried to coax them into getting hold of a lump of coal, they were sure to let it drop in the most inconvenient places—especially if the lump happened to be red-hot. I tried all sorts of ways to train those tongs into better behaviour; but no wiles of mine, and no strength, seemed to prevail; they had been too badly educated from the very beginning. But at last, just as I was despairing of success, I hit upon the ingenious plan of giving those tongs to a poor relative of mine who has just married: thus, at one and the same stroke, I got rid of the silly things that were making my life a misery—and of the poor relative who was nearly as great a nuisance. I think that is the true secret of success, and I give it gladly to all those who feel downhearted: simply to make the most of anything that comes your way.

But why waste a thought on things so abstract as the secret of success? They may delight those frivolous persons who have nothing to do in life but chatter idly and do nothing, but they are nothing to me, because I always have my occupation waiting for me on the August table. In fact, I am sorrowfully amazed at the quantity of humans who seem to have no interest in life beyond the fleeting realms of vain ideas unceasingly brought to light, when they would so greatly prefer remaining hidden beneath simple, sterling facts. Why can't all these poor human brethren turn to an active occupation, like mincing meat and turning out sausages? It would be so much better for them. But then, they simply won't realise it.

C. N. AND A. M. WILLIAMSON

THE FIRST HEAVEN

I

The Hon. Richard Crossworth to his mother, Lady
Crossworth, at Interlaken, Switzerland.

HOTEL DE FRANCE ET D'ANGLETERRE,
FONTAINEBLEAU, MAY 17TH.

DEAR MATER,

First of all, you've just got to wish you were *me*! That seems rather a silly manner of beginning a letter, but things have been moving along at such a pace, that I'm quite beside myself, and it's really not easy at all to start in the ordinary filial way I should feel bound to use if I were just a good little boy writing to his dear mamma.

As it is, I'm going to have *the* time of my life—and I'm only sorry you can't be there to wish me luck, because everything will be in full swing by the time you could get here—and besides, I shouldn't be here any more if you did. But perhaps I ought to try and start explaining matters.

When I left you at Interlaken—Switzerland, you know, is really no end of a bore to a fellow who likes to *do* things—I hardly dreamed I should be called upon to assume the part of Perseus or Bellerophon or St. George, or any of those fellows who got mixed up with dragons and things; but that's exactly what I'm doing now. My dragon is a fairly good specimen of the family; its name is Otis K. Stayvesant, of Detroit, Mich. And all I can say is that it—or shall I say *he*?—jolly well looks the part. I saw him for the first time yesterday, at a little restaurant at Bois-le-Roi, and he immediately struck me as being a miserable bounder. He's stoutish and red and overdressed, with a lot of rings on his fingers, and quite too many diamonds on his cuffs and shirt front (fancy wearing *diamonds* on a motor tour!), and he's got a wife who looks perfectly miserable and intensely tired of him. But she's not the one I'm worrying about: I daresay she married him for his money—and I suppose she's got jolly well what she deserved. Of course, I couldn't help noticing things while we were having *déjeûner* in the garden—such a nice *déjeûner* it was, too; quite simple, you know, but so exquisitely nice that you wonder why you go to Palace Hotels and Ritzes and places like that, where they give you gilded plaster and swells in evening dress to wait on you, when you can have such jolly little meals in nice little places like Bois-le-Roi. But I'm afraid I must begin to philosophize. Well, as I was saying, I couldn't help noticing how Otis K. Stayvesant (I saw his name on the visitors' book) was treating his wife and the servants generally, and, after all, I shouldn't have minded if he hadn't been outright bullying a girl who is with them—a poor relation, I should think, or a superior kind of lady's maid or travelling

companion. He hardly let her eat a single mouthful, poor girl: he was always at her with his "Evelyn, just you go and fetch Mrs. Stayvesant's smelling-bottle"—or anything else he happened to think of; "Evelyn, I'm sure there's a draught—you go and shut that window"; "Evelyn, go and tell that confounded waiter to hurry up with the chicken," and so on, endlessly. Of course, the poor creature went each time—and there was not even a look of resentment in her deep blue eyes as she left the table on these fool's errands. In fact, that was just what attracted my attention: if *I'd* been treated in anything like the same manner, I know I'd have growled at the dragon; at any rate, I'd have shown him by my face what I thought of him. But this girl did nothing of the kind: she seemed to be *amused* at her ordeal! Just think of being amused when you are ordered about, and your succulent *déjeuner* is left to get cold while you tend to some preposterous or imaginary want of an Otis K. Stayvesant! I tell you I felt like getting up and kicking him.

However, I succeeded in mastering that impulse (and I'm not at all sorry now, as you shall presently see); I looked on, making a wry face at the Dragon, and (I think) a sympathetic one at Andromeda—I mean Evelyn. (Don't you think Evelyn is such a sweet little name?). Anyway, this Evelyn, whatever her name, is a beautiful young girl with blue eyes (I believe I mentioned them before) and exquisite blonde hair, just of the right hue, not stupidly flaxen, and not aggressively coppery. She is just like a picture by Henner, with a sort of diaphanous mist round her—a saint's aureole, a poet would call it—which just makes you wish to gaze at her and be good. But I mustn't let this letter be a

simple catalogue of Evelyn's fascinations. (I can see you smiling rather ironically at this sentence: but don't you fall into the mistake of believing her to be mendacious with all her beauty; all her bearing was modesty itself, and her good-humour throughout her ordeal was what initially attracted my attention.)

Well, after that meal (I'm sure *she* must still have felt hungry when the Dragon had feasted himself to a nicety), they got into their motor (a great, big, ugly, brand-new 140 H.P. Daimler) and Otis K. Stayvesant himself sat at the wheel. (Why he had no chauffeur I really don't know, but I greatly suspect the reason is that he can't find one, all the previous ones having been bullied out of his service.) Anyway, I followed in my little green 50 H.P. Renault (the one you bought me in Paris last month, a dear little runner) and I followed the party at a convenient distance. The Dragon's driving was somewhat erratic, but he never put on enough speed to make it dangerous, not even in a forest; and he kept hooting and tooting in such a wild manner that I'm perfectly sure all the little squirrels must have been frightened to death. (The squirrels in the Fontainebleau Forest are quite the liveliest little creatures you can imagine). And after lots of swaggering curves and unheard-of roundabouts, they eventually reached this place—the smartest in Fontainebleau, despite the new-fangled efforts, and stucco-magnificence, of the Savoy.

Naturally, I followed them, and that's why you see the heading of "Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre" on this letter (else, I suppose, I should have gone down south, and stopped at some picturesque place like Dijon). I did the following without any pre-ordained intention: you see, I happened to feel interested in the little group, and just wondered what the Dragon

was going to do next—there were so many caddish things he might have been up to. But what he actually *did* was quite beyond my utmost expectations.

You see the Dragon is rather a rotter at speaking French. There is nothing particularly remarkable in that, of course, and I suppose I'd be just as bad if I hadn't happened to spend four years in Paris under the artistic care of Monsieur Balimbostock (dear, good, sincere, *living* old fellow!) who took me through a course of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. . . . As it is, I was strolling through the hotel garage (and, I am afraid, in rather a *négligé* costume—that of a motorist who has attended his steel Pegasus), when I saw myself confronted with Evelyn herself, with that good-natured smile of hers playing about her mouth. She did not recognise me, of course—she had hardly had time to notice anything around her during the *déjeuner* at Bois-le-Roi—and she evidently thought I was one of the hotel hands in charge of the garage.

“Pardon, Monsieur,” she said in fluent French, and with the suspicion of a blush, “vous ne connaissez pas un pilote d'aéroplane?”

I stared hard for a moment, but something prompted me to play the game. So I just enquired for further particulars, and I heard that Otis K. Stayvesant—“le Monsieur dont j'accompagne la femme”—was trying to find a suitable aeroplane, provided with a chauffeur, to take the party over for a trip to the south of France; it appeared he had got tired of his beastly Daimler (I suppose that meant he didn't care to drive her himself), and, moreover, he had sent her about the place (her, of all people!) to discover the object of his latest whim.

I think the average fellow in my boots would have gone and done something silly at that stage—would

have gone and had a few frank words with the Dragon, and knocked some sense of decency into his silly head ; and it would have served him jolly well right ; but it might not have been particularly useful to the girl—on the contrary, in fact, as she was evidently dependent on him. So I just concentrated my thoughts for a minute or two, and told her I knew exactly the chap her “Monsieur” was in need of, and would get him to call upon Otis K. Stayvesant within two hours. She thanked me for what she called my “amabilité,” and returned indoors,—and I—I ran back to my little Renault, and bolted over to Barbizon.

Of course, you know Jean Langlois is staying at Barbizon ? You remember him, don't you ? He's quite a brick of a fellow, a downright artist in his way, only with altogether too swell an income to devote himself to his talent ; and he messes about with all sorts of hobbies, the latest of which is aviation. I knew he'd just got hold of a 250 H.P. Blériot biplane, with the *duckiest* little cabin imaginable, and I remembered it in good time. Well, to cut the story short, I was lucky enough to find him at home, and to get him to lend me his aeroplane for three or four days—though I didn't let him in to all the private details *you've* got the privilege of knowing.

Anyhow, I was back again before the two hours were over, and boldly asked to see Otis K. S., who was having tea in the garden. He looked me up and down, and asked me (rather aggressively) what I wanted.

“I'm an aeroplane chauffeur,” I replied, quite pleasantly, and in English (you ought to have seen Evelyn start !).

“Wa-ll,” he responded, turning towards the poor girl, “so you weren't tryin' to get at me, after all . . .

All right," he continued, this time for my especial benefit, "I want you to take my little party—there's my wife and myself, and my wife's companion, here—for a fly to the south—and money no objection. What's your price?"

He certainly had rather direct methods of transacting a piece of business, but on the whole, I preferred rapidity—and efficiency—just then. I was rather in a hole to get at a suitable figure, but I managed it on the spur of the moment. I proposed £200 for the trip—and might have said either double or half that sum, for all the attention he seemed to pay. But he didn't lose sight of the financial side of the question for all his apparent inattention, for he calmly said, "That'd be inclusive, I suppose?"

"By all means," I rejoined. And the bargain was struck. I was to have accommodation at the same hotels as my patrons, and we were to start on the morrow.

I told him "my" machine was at Barbizon, and that it would be necessary for them all to "embark" there, as it was impossible to start an aeroplane in the middle of a forest. He seemed rather disgusted at first, but cooled down when I offered to drive the party over to the starting-ground. And so the thing was settled.

I felt rather "cheap" when I had left the Dragon, and was trying to sneak unnoticed to my own room; but I was consoled by a look I had noticed in Evelyn's eyes when she saw me arrive.

There now. That's how I first took my steps in the gentle art of dragon-fighting. The whole trip will only take three days—trust Otis K. Stayvesant for "doing" places in thorough record time; and after that, I suppose I shall have to devise further means for keeping my eye on him and his wife's companion.

Anyway, I shall let you know of any unexpected developments—though there oughtn't to be any; Jean Langlois' "Albatros" is the safest biplane ever produced—so you needn't be anxious on my account. The primitive *cages-à-poules* in which I served my apprenticeship as a would-be aviator were infernal machines compared to this little beauty.

And now, good-bye, little mater—and wish me luck for to-morrow! (And *don't* you wish you could be here and see me?)

Your

DICK CROSSWORTH.

II

Evelyn Carrington to her friend, Elizabeth Hardy,
Laburnam Manor, Southfield, Surrey.

HOTEL DE LA CLOCHE,

DIJON, MAY 18th.

MY DEAREST BETTY,

Oh! Why can't you be here with me, dearest, just at the moment that is *the* moment of my life, instead of losing your best days in the empty round of conventional English country life that makes my heart so unaccountably sick?

I know very well we haven't all got the same tastes in these matters; and it's all very well for you to reproach me with what you call my "romantic views of life;" but I simply can't bear the thought of squandering my spring days in shallow society life, pretending to be full of fun and nonsensical "maidenly" thoughts, when I know very well that I am, sooner or later, to fall a victim to some brute

of a Jason or Hercules. At any rate, you know my views are sincere, and that I have lived up to them. Of course, the fact of my having no family ties (except a guardian who prefers exploring the centre of Australia—and quite right he is, too) and a handsome income of my own, makes it quite easy for me to gratify my taste for adventure, and it's been quite ducky of you to be my *confidante* from the start, without ever giving me away. I haven't forgotten it was through *you* that I found my "situation" as a companion to Mrs. Otis K. Stayvesant, and if, to her and her husband, I am simple Evelyn Thompson (it *was* better to take a *nom de guerre*) I know I am to you, the stupid, romantic, idealistic heiress, whom Society (with a capital S) knew and assailed under the name of Miss Evelyn Carrington; but I am sure Society no longer gives a thought to me, now that I have set my back on it since the last two months—and I can't say I regret it.

I told you, in my previous letters, just what I thought of Mr. Otis K. Stayvesant—and his boulderishness has not at all decreased since then—in fact, it is rather the reverse, as you shall see. But I don't mind it a bit; when he orders me about as is his wont (you see, to him I am just an ordinary "menial") I somehow feel inclined to laugh—and I am sure that is the best thing I can possibly do. He has been more than usually sulky since the last chauffeur gave notice; you see, he has not been able to find another yet, and he feels himself obliged to drive the car himself; he is certainly the rottenest motorist I ever came across, and I honestly believe I could manage his car much better than he can (though I don't suppose I had better say anything about it). Yesterday he eventually got us all out to Fontainebleau, but it was

no fault of his if we didn't break our necks in the forest ; you see, he has such original conceptions of driving, and swerves the car all over the roads (which, by the way, are really exceptionally well kept in these parts). I am sure Mrs. S. would much rather travel by train, but of course *she* daren't open her mouth to her lord and master ! . . . Dearest, those are the joys of married life, and I feel gladder and gladder at having escaped from them !

However, this is the point where the excitement begins. It was at Fontainebleau that my " employer " hit upon a really brilliant idea, and achieved a first-rate caddish act ; he conceived the plan of leaving the Daimler at the garage, and " doing " the rest of the southern trip by aeroplane. Don't you think that's perfectly glorious ? But now comes the Stayvesantishness ; he actually ordered *me* to set about hunting a suitable aviator. Just think of *that* !

But you know it's not my method to cry over spilt milk—and, besides, there wasn't any spilt yet—so I just went over to the hotel garage, thinking I might possibly find someone who could give me the required information, or at any rate, something to go on with. And I came across a Chauffeur (I spell the word with a capital C for reasons which you shall see later on). This Chauffeur seemed just an ordinary human being who had been attending to his usual round of duties ; but there was something about him that made me pick up courage and address him. Dearest, he had none of those brutish looks that I have generally noticed about most men I have come across ; he actually looked *pleased* with his lot. And, for a Frenchman, he had exceedingly fair hair—much more like lots of Englishmen, in fact, than most of his countrymen ;—and, somehow or other, he reminded

me of Lady Crossworth ; I really don't know what it was—the peculiar grey of his eyes, perhaps—or the curve of his lips. . . . Well, anyhow, I asked him, in my most faultless French, whether he knew of any aviator who would undertake to convey us to the South of France, via. . . . over the hills and far away.

He might have burst out laughing outright ; in fact, I half thought he would ; he seemed rather flabbergasted. But, to my surprise and immense gratification (as the lady novelists would say), he answered quite simply that he *did* know a suitable man, and would tell him to call on Mr. Stayvesant that very afternoon.

And, true enough, the man turned up—and who'd you think it was ? Dearest, just imagine : it was my Chauffeur himself ! He didn't seem taken aback by my "employer's" bluntness (lack of manners would be a better term for it), and eventually, everything was settled to their mutual satisfaction. He (the Chauffeur that is) was to drive us over to Barbizon the next morning, and thence we were to start upon our flying tour (that seems to be the right expression, doesn't it ?).

By the way, the Chauffeur speaks English beautifully ; in fact, I have never met a Frenchman with a better accent—which only shows how stupid language prejudices are. Also, I didn't speak to him when he came back in his new capacity of aviator, but I couldn't help feeling glad to have him as the general conductor of the plan ; he seems such a reliable sort of fellow—and I am sure we all need one like him after Mr. Stayvesant's experiences at the wheel.

All that occurred but yesterday, but it *feels* so long ago, that I really don't know exactly what has

come over me. Everything seems so far away, and so bright and lovely—I really can't explain it; it must be the Air!

Have *you* ever been in an aeroplane? I mean a really good, sweet, quiet, touring aeroplane, with a *carrosserie* just like that of a motor-car, and no silly bits of wood or steel wire hanging about everywhere, without a nauseating smell of oil and petrol, and all those disagreeable nothings that were the disgrace of the first flying machines?

Ours is called "L'Albatros," and it deserves its name. It is all nice and white and polished on the outside, and the cabin is full of creamy cushions, and nickel-plated flower-stands, and cut-glass mirrors, and everything else that can be expected of a really decent aeroplane. And it has a white bonnet, with two twelve-cylinder silent motors, and just the sweetest of varnished propellers.

Of course, Mrs. Stayvesant and her lord and master got into the cabin, and after all their luggage had been crammed into it too, there was hardly any room left for me. The Chauffeur—just imagine the politeness of these French people!—noticed it before even I had time to do so, and proposed I should sit outside at the wheel, beside him; he said he had plenty of furs and rugs—and he *had*; so in the end I accepted, much to the joy of Mr. S., who was thus afforded a good opportunity of bullying his little wife, without any *tierce personne* to interfere.

Oh, that first flight! Dearest, I shall not even try to describe it. It was like merry-go-rounds and switchbacks and waltzes and skating and motoring all rolled into one! It was perfectly *divine*! (That's one of those words that are being so sorrowfully misused at the present moment; but now I know exactly what it means.)

At first I felt just a wee tiny bit afraid, and I was glad not to be shut up inside the cabin—though that was a perfectly stupid thought, because if anything happened it wouldn't have mattered a jot *where* I was, of course. . . . But nothing *did* happen, and I felt nothing *could* happen, as long as our Chauffeur had charge of the expedition.

He talked to me, of course—and he chose English as a means for his intercourse, probably because he had noticed my French was not so perfect as his English. My dear, what an all-round culture a French chauffeur *does* possess ! He has travelled all over Europe (which is perhaps not so remarkable in a man of his calling) ; but also in America and Asia, and he seems to know something of any subject one may imagine. In fact, he is as well versed in art as any "gentleman" I have ever met—a good deal more so, in fact ; and when he speaks of the tints of a picture, or the plan of a monument (he is simply *grand* when he gets on the subject of architecture), he is more like a professor delivering a lecture than a mere motorist driving his engine. But don't imagine him as a pedant, a man with all sorts of silly flourishes of empty words, like so many one meets in Museums ; no, he speaks simply, though excitedly, of the things he mentions, and it is easy to see he understands and loves them. I feel sure he must have been an artist before he took on his present calling (one of those the French call *ratés*), but of course I simply couldn't broach the subject ; so I just sat still and listened, putting in a word from time to time, and doing my best to show him I appreciated everything he said.

We didn't fly in anything like a straight line : you see, it would be stupid to compare our "Albatros" to a silly black *crow*. And we dipped down west, and

actually flew over the Loire and some of its old *châteaux*. . . .(1)

And that is how we arrived at Dijon, our first halting-place, where we shall "lie" for the night (as the old books say).

I am feeling just beautifully contented with life, and not even Mr. Otis K. Stayvesant could make me lose anything of the high spirits I am in after this *delightful* first flight.

To-morrow we go on, and shall stop at Nîmes for lunch, and thence on to the Riviera. And then—

Dearest, I am dropping to sleep, and I am perfectly sure I shall dream of angels, and albatrosses, and swans, and all sorts of sweet things with white wings—and perhaps also (a little) of my Chauffeur.

Good-bye, dearest; I shall let you have my further impressions to-morrow.

Your delighted

EVELYN.

III

Richard Crossworth to his Mother.

HOTEL D'EUROPE,

MONTPELLIER, MAY 19th.

DEAR MATER,

Things have been moving rapidly since the day before yesterday, but there is nothing disagreeable (to me) in their rapidity. I remember telling you in that first letter, about my career as a fighter of

(1) Here occurs a break in the authors' M.S., but we advise our readers to look up their Guide Joanne or their Baedeker (English Edition) for an accurate description of the scenery.—Ed.

dragons : You've got to wish you were *me* ! Well, that wish applies stronger than ever ; just now, in fact—but let me relate everything that happened.

The first day of our aerial journey was quite uneventful, as far as incidents are concerned. Jean Langlois' " Albatros " is a beautifully-behaved bird, and the start from Barbizon came off quite smoothly. Oh, I forgot to mention another of the Dragon's acts of caddishness :—Of course, he and Mrs. S. got into the cabin as soon as they arrived on the scene ; further, he insisted on putting all their traps inside with them (I suppose he rather mistrusted me, and imagined I might feel inclined to go through them if they had been left outside with me). Well, anyway, there were so many of them, that there was absolutely no room left for that all-suffering poor girl, Evelyn. So she was obliged to take a seat beside me. Luckily, I had brought a whole lot of rugs with me, and I managed to make her comfortable ; and it wasn't very cold, as we never flew either very high or very fast. And thus it came about that we were thrown into conversation with each other, because "*que faire autour d'un volant, à moins que l'on n'y cause ?*"

I'm afraid I must rather have bored her, because I really couldn't switch on to any personal talk with a girl I didn't know in the least, and who, moreover, couldn't be told the truth about me. So I began talking of Art—especially architecture : the topic sprang up quite of itself, on account of some of the *châteaux* we flew over. Still, she listened as if she were interested, and even threw in rather apt remarks : it really was the first time I heard a woman (barring my little Mater, of course) express anything worth saying on the subject of Art ; and I was immensely pleased not to find the poor creature insufferably dull—as I had at first feared.

We really got on capitally together, and by the time we landed at Dijon, we had both, I am sure, got rid of our mutual shyness towards each other. Mrs. Stayvesant had a headache in the evening, and her lord and master didn't feel like leaving the hotel. But it would have been a shame to miss the sights of the old Burgundian capital, especially on such a nice day as this. So I offered to show Evelyn round the place, with the result that we spent two or three delightful hours.

First of all, we went to. . . . (1).

It really felt as if all the glorious past, the Hundred Years' war, the Middle-Ages, with all their chivalry and cruel splendour, were alive and dancing before our eyes, and when we came back to dinner, we were both passionately engrossed in "ye olden times."

Neither the dragon nor Mrs. S. appeared at *Table d'Hôte*; and that dinner was simply gorgeous. I don't simply mean the food; of course, Dijon is noted for its luxurious *pâtés*, and we did ample justice to them, as well as to everything else the smiling *garçons* set before us; but the air seemed full of a sort of electrical thrill, that would have made even dry bread and muddy water seem a glorious feast. It was a sort of confidential mood, and I longed to tell poor, badly-treated Evelyn the whole truth—just as I felt she was on the verge of confiding to me the story of all her troubles—but somehow I managed to resist the temptation, and am glad I did so—now.

This morning, Mrs. S. no longer suffered from headache, and the Dragon was as aggressively dragonish as ever; but I let him be, as I didn't want to

(1)—Another break in the MS. Vide Footnote on page 146
—(Ed.)

spoil the magic of the day by any retorts I might have let loose upon him—though God knows he deserved much more than anything I might have said.

The start was as perfect as yesterday (really the “Albatros” is a perfect little flyer!) and, of course, Evelyn had to sit outside again. She looked somewhat reserved, after yesterday evening’s latent confidential mood, and we again spoke of general subjects—history being the chief topic of our discourse.

We landed at Nîmes about noon, and after *déjeuner* resumed our journey: we were to go on to Nice, and thence, to-morrow, to “do” the Riviera. However, the gods decided otherwise——

At this stage I can see your brows lifting, and hear you exclaim something about an accident. . . . Well, yes, there was an accident: though not a very bad one; and the fact that I am writing to you *after* it occurred must set aside your fears for good and all.

It was just outside Tarascon the thing occurred. Everything had been going so smoothly, I really couldn’t dream of imagining anything out of the way; but there came a sharp snap, and the next thing I knew was that we were dropping for all we were worth. The more speed I tried to put on, the more we seemed to drop—and then I saw what was the matter: the propellor was broken. I tried the steering gear, and put on a little upward curve—but we were far too low down for me to be able to perform a proper landing. Which is a warning to me in future. I shall never, never, *never*, fly below a thousand feet. As it was, we had been hardly above two hundred, and I saw the fields rushing up towards us at a terrific speed. I put on all the upward curve I could, and awaited developments. And then the crash came.

As soon as I felt it come, I let go the wheel, of

course, and took hold of Evelyn, who was as pale as death : I wanted to protect *her*, at all events, as much as was in my power. And from the inside of the cabin there issued a mixture of wails and American oaths, such as had never before been my privilege to hear—a thing I don't regret.

It was fortunate for us the road from Tarascon to Cette is grown with high poplars and spreading fruit-trees. As it is, we just dashed into one of the former, which sent us spinning on to one of the others, and thence into a neighbouring field : but the final drop was only about ten feet, and the field was a vineyard that a thoughtful labourer had just been shovelling through and through. Also, the aeroplane didn't fall just on top of us, but swerved aside—which just proves its sense.

There wasn't much harm done—except to the “Albatros,” and the two poor trees. Mr. and Mrs. S. had been able to drop out of the cabin before the machine touched ground—and I rolled into the field. After a few minutes of dizziness, I tried to get up, and felt a funny sort of pain in my left arm ; and I saw I couldn't move it as I wanted to. Evelyn had fainted, but she soon came to, and she was only slightly bruised and scratched. The next thing I heard was the Dragon's voice, cursing her—actually cursing her !

“Look here, you—silly girl,” he yelled, “why the —— couldn't you hit upon a——fellow who knew his —— work. You leave my service this minute, you. . .” and he kept on stringing his picturesque Wall Street oaths together, just like a music-hall nigger.

Altogether, it was more than I could stand ; and I walked across to him.

“Mr. Otis K. Stayvesant,” I said, trying to speak

as calmly as I could (which was difficult, under the circumstances) "you're a brute and a cad!" And I forbid you to speak like that to a young lady."

"You forbid?" he blurted out, "you rotten young half-a-dime flying fool! And who are *you*, to forbid *me* anything I jolly well please to do?"

And then I told him my name.—Oh, Mater, you should have seen him stare, and mumble inarticulately for at least five minutes, and walk about excitedly, and generally behave like the fool he was. . . . But my enjoyment of his discomfiture was suddenly put a stop to by Evelyn's cry.

"What?" she exclaimed, in a high-pitched voice, "you are the Honourable Richard Crossworth, Lady Crossworth's only son? Oh, I *thought* something of the kind. . ."

That last phrase of hers came like a thunderbolt; how could *she* know anything about me, and still more, about *you*? . . .

And then she told me all . . . Mater, she's not at all the poor girl I thought her to be; she's one of your friends; she's an heiress; she's Evelyn Carrington! She ran away from a country-house in England, because she couldn't bear the shallowness of society life for a young girl . . . She . . . She's the perfectest perfect *dear* I've ever met!

Mater, congratulate me—congratulate us both! . . . I shall write again to-morrow.

Your rapturous

DICK.

IV

Telegram from Evelyn Carrington to her friend,
Elizabeth Hardy.

HOTEL D'EUROPE,
MONTPELLIER, MAY 19th.

DEAREST,

Things have happened. The Chauffeur isn't a chauffeur. He's Dick Crossworth. We're to be married at Interlaken, where his mother is staying. Congratulate me.

EVELYN.

JOSEPH CONRAD

DAM 'IM—A REMINISCENCE

I

THE man turned slowly his head ; something in his quiet gaze aroused in the intricacies of a mind used to analyse the prompt reactions of soul upon body and of calling and training upon mere outer personality that peculiar interest which, though not thrilling, is the beginning of everything that any man may feel usually with his heart or understand more or less incompletely with his brain.

He was standing by himself in the respectable bar, with a tankard of ale within arm's reach ; a medium-sized, non-committal sort of man, in a rather shabby greyish suit, and boots that had long ago ceased to be shining. He might have been anything from a retired barber to an unsuccessful actor ; a labourer in some way, and yet perhaps an employer of labour—a man, certainly, with a touch of superintendency in his quiet glance. There was also about him a hint of rebellion against the everyday, humdrum, mass of human machines ; products of the same depressing organism, mere tools in the hands of

fools or of knaves, *they* went steadily their ways, like so many blind sheep, following stupidly a still more stupid leader. Here was a fellow with an individuality all his own ; capable of willing actually something by himself, and of even carrying through steadily his purpose. An uncommon fellow, few like whom come to a man's ken in a lifetime.

My eyes have been accustomed since ever so long, while gazing intently at some object definite, material and physical, to, all at once, whizz off into the domain of remembrance, with its myriad vistas tragic, beautiful or indifferent. This was now the case as I looked at the man ; I reverted unconsciously to far-off days under an ever-smiling sun, before I had got used to shore togs, and had not yet exchanged the elemental sarong for a square mainsail coat. Unconsciously I was projected headlong into the fanciful realm of Southern Islands, and my ears seemed to be ringing with the voice of old remembrance, a voice mournful, immense and dear. . .

But not only remembrance was at work now ; no, there were also the waves of air at the proper length, propagated in accordance with correct mathematical formulas, flowing resolutely into my brain-centres, and re-echoing names sundry, bizarre and unusual, names that I had heard already, pronounced surely in such a voice calm, unemotional and exotic. . . And suddenly my eyes seemed to be drawn away from their wandering in the land of long-ago ; they reverted once again to the stranger, and noted that he was now speaking deliberately, and, moreover, to me. He came slowly forward as he talked, and I began to situate him in time as well as space. . . . And yet. . . . Preposterous ! . . . Queer, exotic though he appeared, there was still something strangely

familiar, not only about his sunburnt and clean-shaven face, but in the whole of his attitude, and even—yes—even in his voice. Then he uttered a word that put me on the track of the elusive past, like a black sea that pitches suddenly a dreaming sailor to the precise spot whither he was groping his way in the dark. It was only a word, but it aroused through the length and breadth of my wandering mind, an outburst of evanescent consciousness, a flicker of light amongst the floundering mass of things past, of things half forgotten, of things not quite remembered.

“Dam’ Im,” was the word recurring several times in the man’s talk ; and suddenly I uprose from my seat—and remembered him.

“Surely I know you now,” I said, “you are the Bugis from one of the states of Wajo.”

Yes, he was—of course, now, I knew. His name was Dam’ Im, and I had traded often with him in the harbour of Ucee—at least, he used to call grandiloquently a harbour what was really little more than a hospitable atoll, behind which stretched the smiling sunlit shore of a little island crowned in the distance by stately peaks over which Dam’ Im had not exercised yet his power. The kind of trade I had indulged in was the usual one for South Sea ship-owners to commission their skippers to carry out : I used to smuggle a few nearly valueless old rifles to his shore, hand him some rounds of ammunition, and receive sound dollars in exchange ; of course, such trading was not without its risks, but where is the fairly young skipper in the merchant service who will not run them all and be glad, adding as they do their glamour and spice to the favours and the rages of the sea ?

And now here was Dam’ Im talking to me under other skies, after so many years that I hardly had

remembered him at all. Here is his story, which I repeat, as far as I am able, in his own words, only pausing now and again to add a word, explanatory, descriptive, or personal.

II

“ It was after you had left Ucee for the last time. The white *tuans* that came after you were not to be trusted. I did not like them, and Drat’ Er, my faithful follower, saw always the bad spirit in them.

“ And he was right. Soon there began to dawn some trouble in the island. The Cheekis tribe—our brothers of the island, with whom we had been so long at peace—came down their mountain-sides, and sent their chief, Ballywho, to parley with me, Dam’ Im, who had power and many lands, and guns such as the Dutch use, and a large store of powder. But little did I know that Ballywho had at that very moment some guns of his own, which other traders must have smuggled to his mountains from the other side of the island. I knew I was strong, and my followers numerous—but alas ! I knew not that Ballywho was also strong, and fortified with the weight of his wiles.

“ He wanted his tribe to have the free run of Ucee harbour—without any taxes to pay, mind . . . Now, how could I, Dam’ Im, continue to live in my stockade, and pay dollars for rifles and ammunition, if the Cheekis payed taxes no more ? So I refused, of course, and Ballywho returned towards his mountains with a message of war.

“ Drat’ Er, my faithful retainer, exulted in the news, as soon as I told him. But conscious of my strength as I was, I could not help fearing the unknown

future. Who knows what all the dead ancestors of my tribesmen thought of the war that was to come—the more so as I intended to defend their thatched roofs no longer with kriss and flint-headed arrow, but with the white man's fire-bullet? What would happen if Ballywho and his mountain tribe threw us effectually back? . . . The night seemed full of the unknown, and the future loomed ominous.

“The same night, three hours after Ballywho had left my stockade with my decision of war, an evil omen clouded my brow. My pink cat Dearo died suddenly, in horrible agony . . . Deaths, deaths, deaths!”

He uprose as he repeated thrice the word, and his expression was so serious, so tragic, so full of poignancy of the unknown, that, for an instant, I felt the tears surge in my eyes, and sobs rush, strangling one another, to the top of my throat. . . . He continued, in a calmer tone :

“You say the dead are dead. . . . Perhaps they are, in your country; perhaps your powerful king can kill them to the core. But the chiefs of our isles have not enough strength, and our dead do not really die They live for ever, especially at night, and they flit about one, and whisper, and cry. . . . Yes, and cats are harder still to kill than men and women. Dearo was ever present before my eyes, in the rooms of my campong, in my prau when I went out to command the harbour, in the folds of my sarong. He was always there, wailing, suffering, dying. . . .

“I left my stockade, I left my harbour of Ucee, I left my old retainer, Drat' Er—and all for Dearo . . . For Dearo! I could not bear the sight of his suffering form in the peace and quiet of my rooms—and I fled,

I fled. . . . I went towards the mountains, to seek Ballywho ; and ever Dearo was before my eyes, suffering agonies, dying, and always alive. . . . Alive ! . . . I saw Ballywho in the midst of his inland village, and he saw me. He thought I came as an enemy, he thought I was leading my warriors to trap him in the dark of the night. Yes, that is what he thought, while I was but poor Dam' Im, fleeing from the horrible sight of a dead cat that would not die. . . .

" I saw him lift a rifle to his shoulder. . . . Even then I might have crouched, I might have fled, I might have returned to Drat' Er and to Ucee ; but the face of Dearo appeared again before my eyes, and I could not move . . . I saw a blaze ; I heard a thundering, loud, near, and horrible . . . And I remember no more. . . .

" When I awoke, I found myself in a prau, and was soon carried aboard a white man's ship. . . . The fire-bullet of Ballywho's rifle put me in the hands of my enemies ; it had, moreover, pinned my left arm to my side, and made me as helpless as a baby, but it must have also killed the ghost of Dearo, for, since that tragic night, I saw him no more . . . no more.

" I remained on board the *Sea Dog*, and heard later that Ballywho was now master of Ucee. . . . But I never returned to my native shore, lest the dead ghost of the dead Dearo should come to life again. . . . I am now poor and lonely, I who was powerful and a king in my own island. . . . But I worship the white man's king, whose fire-bullet has freed me of my horrible ghost. . . . Yes, he is now dead, dead ! "

I think he might have done worse than become a sailor. . . .

HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

THE SKIPPER

MY brother Ajax had just come back from the range, and met me as I was coming dejectedly out of our kitchen, where I had been trying some rather unhappy experiments in cookery.

"I say," he called out, "do you remember a fellow called Peterson?"

"What sort of a fellow?" I asked, "a tramp or a millionaire?"

"I don't know what he is at the present moment," he answered, "though I should hardly think he is actually a millionaire. But he's supposed to have been at Harrow in our time."

I pondered some seconds over this latter piece of information, and exclaimed excitedly: "Why, of course! He was Bodson's fag; don't you remember him—a chap with reddish hair, any amount of freckles, and enormously large hands? . . . But what made you ask me?"

My brother proceeded to expound the reason for his question. A man calling himself Peterson had applied to Uncle Jake for our protection, under the

delusion, no doubt, that our ranch was a sort of roof and shelter for any social derelict who passed that way. In those days California was not by any means what it is now, and the number of luckless Englishmen it had lured to an ultimate failure was considerably greater than anything we had imagined at that period of ingenuity, when we hadn't yet learned that ignorance must always pay its premium to experience. We had often enough (far too often, if the truth must be told) given our hospitality to passing tramps, and had several times been made to pay for our greenness in full. Wherefore, *au premier abord*, as the French say, I felt inclined to eye any stranger with mistrust—especially that kind of stranger whose first and foremost appeal rested on the worn grounds of auld lang syne and school-fellowship.

"I think we've seen about enough of tramps on this ranch," I said quietly.

"Just what I thought, too," returned my brother. "But this chap doesn't appear to be a tramp at all, according to uncle Jake—and, besides, I believe you're wanted to do the necessary jawing."

Now, at least, I saw what he was driving at. Ajax, being the younger, always expected me to take the lead in formal circumstances. If I say more or less than he deems advisable, I am let in for a sound rating after the ceremony. So this time I took my precautions.

"Right you are," I said, "I'll put him off our trail in record time. Where did you say he was?"

"Uncle Jake told him to wait for us in front of the big barn," came the answer. "But you can't chuck him out like a twopenny-halfpenny beggar who calls for a crust of bread. After all, if he's known us at Harrow. . . ."

I took the affair resolutely into my hands ; " At any rate," I said, " I'm just going to have a look at the fellow."

We rode off together, and met our head vacquero before we got within earshot of the barn. Uncle Jake was glad I had come out, and said so. Yes, the stranger was still waiting for us in the shade of our barn. In reply to my eager questions, I elucidated that he was not at all a disreputable-looking loafer, but had the air of a successful rancher. " He's not like that other Britisher you took hold of last year, Mr. Ajax," he said, turning to my brother, " you know, the one who looked like hell before you dressed him, and like San Lorenzo afterwards—yes, and managed to clear away with the money he took out of your safe. . . . So I jus' told him you'd come along and see him."

" If he's so respectable," I put in, " it might have been advisable to see him into the house."

" There's no knowing," cautiously replied Uncle Jake, and Ajax nodded approvingly. I confess that I was not averse to the same opinion. So, without any more words, both of us proceeded to interview the visitor.

We found him in the shade of the big barn, looking calmly at us as if we had met casually in Piccadilly.

" Good morning," he said affably.

His voice and his manner were equally irreproachable. Moreover, his aspect was quite " engaging " (to use the French word). Clean, without even one day's growth of beard on his square chin, he stood up quietly in all the dignity of his neat riding kit, for all the world like a successful rancher or a spirited sportsman. We acknowledged the salutation and he went on : " I daresay you don't remember me . . . I see it in your faces . . . Well, never mind—I

haven't called to try and squeeze a fiver out of you . . . You see, I was just passing through this country, and heard you had settled down—so I resolved to look you up . . . I hope you will pardon the intrusion ? ”

Ajax looked bluntly at him. “ Our head vacquero reported you were a Harrow fellow. You weren't at Tommy's by any chance ? ”

“ No, mine was Bobby's . . . Ever heard of a chap they used to call the Skipper ? ”

“ What ! The Skipper, Mathers' special chum ? ” I cried out. “ You don't mean to say you're the Skipper ? ”

The conviction (indicated by a pleasant smile) was apparent on the stranger's face, and he went on rather more glibly than before.

“ That's all right. I gave your man my name, and I daresay you may have mistaken me for some other fellow. I believe there *were* several Petersons at Harrow in my time.”

“ Suppose,” put in Ajax, “ we came round to the house. We can't entertain you very well out here, but we'll do what we can indoors.”

There was amusement in the glance I threw him ; however, I didn't add anything, beyond asking Peterson where he had stabled his horse.

“ Oh, ! ” he said, “ one of your cowboys took it inside the barn. I'm sure it will get on very well as it is.”

The three of us were soon assembled in our comfortable sitting-room. We lit our pipes, and after some minutes of small talk, the conversation took its natural turn towards personal matters. We discussed a few old memories of our respective houses, and then, under my brother's searching glance, I managed to put in a question that was intended as a “ corker.”

"Well, look here, Skipper, I don't suppose your only reason for looking us up was to hear yourself chaffed and talk over Billy's and Tommy's? Is there anything we can do for you?"

My "corker" went considerably wide of its mark.

"The fact is," answered Peterson, "I was passing through this part of California, and I thought I might just come and see you . . . I hope I'm not intruding, or trespassing on your time?"

"Er . . . no, not at all," put in Ajax, as formally as he would have done in a Park Lane drawing-room. And I hastened to add a few words to the same effect.

"Well," continued the Skipper, "how are you fellows doing? Or are you down on your luck?"

Now was the time for me to exercise the gentle art of diplomacy. I looked meaningly at Ajax, and replied rather dejectedly to our visitor.

"Of course, things never turn out so brilliant as you hope they will. I'm afraid my brother and I are rather green at the trade, and, of course, we can't expect to succeed at the outset. The worst of it is, so many of our . . . er . . . kind neighbours seem to find it incumbent upon them to do us out of our lawful profits—whenever we happen to make any. There was an old man named Dumble, who managed to swindle those colts away from us, and our inestimable friend, Laban Swiggart, who successfully "had" us in the affair of the fifteen fat steers. . . . However, we don't complain: we didn't come out here to make our fortunes—so after all, there is no more to be said."

Peterson looked ruthfully at us; there was compassion and kindness in that look of his, and I confess that I felt rather ashamed at the several falsehoods I had concocted. He answered something about our

being strivers, not thrivers, and we kept him to dinner.

The meal was rather more elaborate than those we were used to ; our housekeeper saw to things, and evidently did not intend that our guest should be impressed by a rough-and-tumble Californian apology for a dinner. In spite of the claret (it was a bottle of Romanée Conti, '89, I remember) he insisted on retiring very soon after his first pipe, pretexting the necessity of an early departure next day. The evening passed very pleasantly, however, though the conversation was limited to old-time memories, "shop" being, as by mutual consent, excluded ; and in spite of reiterated offers of toddy, Peterson soon went off to bed.

Next morning I got up rather later than usually, and my brother welcomed me on my appearance with an enigmatic smile : " Do you happen to remember," he asked, " why that fellow Peterson was nicknamed ' The Skipper ' ? "

" What's the matter ? " I asked hastily, " what's he been up to ? "

" Nothing," replied Ajax, " except that he's gone."

" Well," I answered, " he said he wanted to leave early, but I'm hanged if I thought he meant it as truly as this. Besides, in all decency, he might have said good-bye before quitting. . . ."

" To say nothing of ' thank you,' if not for the dinner, at least for the wine," added Ajax.

" Which reminds me," I broke in. " He was called the ' Skipper ' just for that very reason : for his fondness of leaving things undone."

" At all events," said my brother, " that's better than doing those one shouldn't do at all."

The words made me attentive, and I hastened

to the little room where we kept our burglar-proof safe. There it was, perfectly intact, and I was beginning to feel a despicable fool, when my eyes alighted upon a neat little packet upon the desk. It was a thick envelope, duly closed and sealed, and bore the joint inscription of my brother's name and my own, in a large, bold handwriting—a handwriting I did not recognise, but immediately attributed to our departed guest. I called Ajax, and we opened the packet: a bunch of crisp white sheets of paper appeared within the envelope—no fewer than two hundred ten-pound Bank of England notes.

“What the dickens . . . ?” I cried out.

“Well, I’m——” ejaculated Ajax, whose language is apt to be a trifle more forcible than mine on certain occasions.

* * * * *

We never heard from Peterson while we remained ranching in California, and I never unearthed the mystery of those two thousand pounds till I was back again in England. I was dining at Gloriani's, which is decidedly my restaurant “of predilection” (to use the French phrase)—perhaps because the Glory is not there dispossessed by the Gold, perhaps because I happen to be on friendly terms not only with Agostino the head waiter, but also with the padrone himself, who, for the rest, resolutely refuses to employ German waiters. I was sitting down to a luscious *tournedos* such as only a continental chef can do to a nicety, and was slowly sipping a glass of old Romanée Conti—'89, I believe it was—when I happened to observe a man at a table near mine, whose face seemed oddly familiar. There seemed to be a subtle link between

the wine and the face, for I became unconsciously aware that my neighbour had driven me from that paradise of a dinner-table which has no room for two. And then, suddenly, I remembered: the face was that of Peterson, the "Skipper," the man whose visit to our ranch, years ago, had been marked so vividly in my memory.

I went over to him, and after the usual words of surprise and welcome, we both sat down to the same table. While we were sipping the wine—to which, I remember, I applied a string of fragrant epithets of the west—I suddenly broached the subject of the mysterious banknotes. Peterson blushed like a girl.

"What beats me," I added, "is the fact that they should have been left on purpose—I mean, not simply dropped, lost, or strayed."

So "striking" (to use the French word) was my question, that Peterson set down his glass, and said carefully: "I thought it was the only way of helping you."

"Do you mean to say," I ejaculated, "that the money is yours?" And a crowd of questions sprang to my lips.

"Never mind that, for the present," answered the Skipper, reverting to his favourite method, "the question is: was it sufficient to keep you from ruin?"

I burst out laughing. "I'm afraid there has been a mutual mistake," I was able to add; "you thought us on the verge of failure—and we mistook you for a common parasite. I confess I did what I could to induce you into your error, though you did nothing of the same kind." And I proceeded to explain the reasons for my pessimistic conversation: you can't draw blood from a stone, and no tramp out West would dream of robbing a couple of ruined Britishers.

Now was his turn to burst into a sound laugh.

“ Oh ! ” he exclaimed, “ to think you were pulling my leg all the time ! Why, I actually took you at your word, and that is precisely the reason for all that followed. I had more money by me than I could ever hope to spend upon myself, and I immediately decided to use it to help two old schoolfellows in distress. Of course I couldn’t shove the notes brutally into your hand, so I had to make use of stratagem : that was the only reason for my retiring so early—and for my departing earlier still.”

And I answered *sotto-voce*, as my brother would have bellowed : “ Well, I’m——”

F. ANSTEY

AN OFFICERS' GEFANGENENLAGER IN GERMANY

Scene : A more or less well paved paddock, with a large building at one side, and some wooden huts on the other ; the grounds are surrounded with barbed wire, and a considerable number of electric lamps and telegraph poles are visible ; the artistic effect is completed by a few pine trees and various seedy shrubs.

A few hundred officers of divers nationalities are walking about in small groups.

1st British Officer (to 2nd ditto) : How long did you say you'd been in this damned place ?

2nd B.O. : Two years to-morrow.

1st B.O. : By Jove ! You don't expect me to remain as long as that, do you ?

2nd B.O. : My dear fellow, I'm afraid I don't expect you to do anything at all. But I've already lost two fivers betting on the length of the war, and have completely given up speculating on the question.

1st B.O. : Anyway, what do you do here ?

2nd B.O. : Anything you jolly well please. Splendid opportunity for learning foreign languages, bracing air, fine climate, wholesome food, and all that, you know.

1st B.O. : Foreign languages ! Phew ! I don't mind doing a little French, but I'm afraid Russian's something beyond my line. Have you started ?

2nd B.O. : Sorry to say I have—and a more murderous thing in the way of jawing it's hard to conceive ; beats German hollow ; full of declensions and things, you know ; but it's useful to pass away the time.

1st Russian Officer : Kak vuee poshivietié ?

2nd B.O. : Harasho, spaceebo . . . Now look here, Petroff, you've got to speak English just now : here's my friend Brown, who doesn't know a word of Russian, but who's going to learn.

1st B.O. : Here, half a second, old fellow. I never said I intended to : I'm sure I'm quite incapable of . . .

1st R.O. : Oh ! Ze Russian is not difficult, ze English is very difficulter.

2nd B.O. : No, not " difficulter "—" more difficult," you know.

1st R.O. : Yes : to us always hard know when say one word or ze ozer. But I hope before ze end of ze war, know more of ze English.

1st B.O. : Of course. I'm sure I'll be jolly glad to know as much Russian as you know of our language.

1st R.O. : Eet is easy ; ze English pronounce is terrible ; ze Russian is much lighter.

2nd B.O. : I daresay—but what about your verbs—and your declensions, especially your bloody numbers, eh ?

1st R.O. : Eet ees necessary learn them, zat ees all.
Zere is . . . rulers . . .

2nd B.O. : Not "rulers"—"rules."

1st R.O. : Yes, rules. Een English zere is only ze exceptions.

1st B.O. : At any rate, when I left England, I was under the impression that I was to fight—and *not* against grammatical rules.

1st French Officer (to second ditto) : Tiens, voilà Jones : ça doit être l'heure de ma leçon.

2nd F.O. : Tu trouves ça chic, de faire de l'anglais à outrance ?

1st F.O. : Mon vieux, c'est toujours ça de pris sur la captivité . . . D'ailleurs, toi, tu fais bien du russe—alors . . .

1st F.O. (to 2nd B.O.) : Eet ees ze hour of ze lesson, ees eet not ?

2nd B.O. : Right you are, old boy. Let's go to the dining-room : we'll be a little warmer in there. *They move off together, while the 2nd F.O. does the same with the R.O.*

For a few moments words like :

Yes—Mais non—Harasho—Da—Not at all—C'est ça etc., are heard ; upon which a group of B.O.'s with tennis rackets come upon the scene).

3rd B.O. : I think it's our turn now ; the other fellows have had their go at the courts.

4th B.O. : Besides, we've got to hurry up if we want to play at all. I heard from a German soldier that the tennis is going to be suppressed.

Chorus of protesting B.O.'s : What ? — Damn these Boches!—Impossible!—Why?—How?—When?—Beastly swine, I call 'em, etc.

3rd F.O. (to a young B.O. who is the Hon. Sec. of Dramatic Society) : Well, when is your next performance coming off ?

The Hon. Sec. : I'm afraid there won't be any next performance at all. The Kommandantur is going to suppress them.

3rd F.O. : What's the matter with them ?

The H.S. : I'm sure *I* don't know. Probably "reprisals" of some sort. You know these fellows are always up to some trick or other. They can never leave a chap in peace. One day they allow a thing, and as soon as the expenses have been run into, they put a stop to it. Jolly convenient to favour their beastly trade !

3rd F.O. : Jolly convenient, I daresay—but jolly swinish too. Not that it astonishes me at all, after all I've seen.

The H.S. : Yes, I should think you know something about them and their methods, after your five months' imprisonment ! . . . Well, whatever happens, we'll pull through some way or other.

3rd F.O. : We'll jolly well have to . . . By the way, do you happen to know of any English officer who would like to learn French ? There's a friend of mine who'd like to exchange some lessons with an Englishman.

The H.S. : I don't *know* of anyone ; but there's that new fellow arrived yesterday evening ; he ought to be game . . . I say, though, you're generally well informed : what's the latest in " tuyaux ? "

3rd F.O. : I'm afraid you're applying to the wrong man . . . However, I may tell you—confidentially, mind—that the Americans are seriously thinking of declaring war against Germany.

The H.S. : Seen something in the *Koelnische Zeitung*, or some other of their beastly papers ?

3rd F.O. : Better than that. I've got the unsolicited opinion of a member of what a journalist would style " the British public."

The H.S. : How's that ?

3rd F.O. : Well, the other evening I was sitting in the dining-room, doing some English with two other chaps, when the English soldier who serves at the table—you know, the one with the vicious cockney accent—came up to me and calmly proceeded to develop his views on foreign politics.

The H.S. : Just like his cheek !

3rd F.O. : “ Well, sir,” he blurted out, “ d’you think as the ’Nited States ’ll soon jine in this ’ere war ? Blime if it wouldn’t be a good stroke for these ’ere Boches—an’ I honestly b’lieve as they’ll ’ave a go at ’em jolly soon — an’ serve ’em right, too ! Don’t you think so, sir ? ”

The H.S. : Some of us have had their eyes on that fellow for some time, and I think he might be sent away to a soldiers’ camp ; he’s getting rather too cheeky altogether—like that tall Canadian who got drunk—God knows on what—about five times a week !

3rd F.O. : Oh, if that’s all, there’s no very great harm done . . .

The H.S. : But that’s not all. He’s getting much too swelled-headed altogether, and I’m sure it’d do him no end of good to clear out of here.

(Etc.)

1st Italian Officer (to *4th F.O.*) : Oggi parliamo italiano ; Lei ha parlato francese tutta la giornata d’ieri.

4th F.O. : Come lei vuol. Insomma, l’italiano per me non è più difficile del francese per Lei . . . Allons-y.

1st I.O. : Non capisco “ Allons-y ! ”

4th F.O. : E domani, io non capirò "Avanti."

1st I.O. : Va bene !

(Etc.)

(A distant shout—something between the bark of an angry dog and the explosion of a German 42-cm. shell—is heard, and discussed in an international group of prisoners.)

5th F.O. : Bon Dieu ! Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont donc, ces cochons-là ?

5th B.O. : Damn them and their b——y noises ! What the dickens was that ?

3rd R.O. : Chorrt vazmee ! Chto takoyè ? Kakeeyè svolochee !

A German N.C.O. : (approaching the group) : Achtung ! Achtung !

5th B.O. (to 5th F.O.) : Sayt ung general boche kee viang par eecy. Say le momong de clearay out. . .

5th F.O. : Ces bougres-la ne peuvent pas nous foutre la paix cinq minutes ? Mais vous avez raison, Nicholson ; c'est le moment de se débîner . . .

(Scene closes in as a stout German General, heralded by the barkings of "Achtung" by the impassive N.C.O. and as impassive a "leutnant," advances upon the international group that hastily disperses.)

A TETRALOGY (NOT BY WAGNER)

(The following short, but thrilling, story, is the work of four of our most brilliant novelists—two of whom, in fact, have already collaborated in longer and successful works. By a stroke of good luck, we are now able to offer our readers this new tale in four chapters: each chapter was written by one of the collaborators, in his most characteristic vein, Mr. Arnold Bennett being responsible for the opening episode in the Five Towns, Mr. Henry Harland, for the second act, in Northern Italy, Mr. Eden Phillpotts for the middle part, the scene of which is laid on Dartmoor, and Sir H. Rider Haggard having written the sequel, occurring, of course, in South Africa. We venture to hope that this original story will meet with the unrestricted approval of our readers.)

PART I.

ARNOLD BENNETT

AT that particular moment when the relative positions of the sun and of this little earth caused it to be what is generally known as 9 a.m. all along the meridian that is kind enough to split Bursley from North to South, William Thomas Dorner might have been found

sitting at his little desk, behind the showrooms of the Imperial Porcelain Emporium—which is only large for shop. William Thomas Dorner was an accountant—which is merely bluff for clerk—at a salary of a hundred a year, and with high artistic cravings. These, the Empire Porcelain Company, whose works are at the bottom of the hill where Hanbridge begins, allowed him to satisfy absolutely free of charge, in the contemplation of its own most beautifully inconvenient premises, and of its gently villainous-looking ledgers. Of course, the Emporium itself, that is the showrooms where the British public were requested to enter—equally free of charge—and to acquire at a purely nominal price some of the wares therein exposed, was of a quite different style of architecture. There, the floors were everywhere covered with the latest thing in carpets, to which, of course, the British public did the usual amount of damage at the rate of about five pounds a minute per square foot. The walls were thickly padded with high-class purple hangings, the precise tint of which had been chosen by an expert in colour-schemes—you know the sort of men: they earn about a hundred guineas every time they allow their eyelids to part open. Now, as to the ceiling—well, there probably *was* one; but it was so high up as to be practically invisible to anyone but the particularly long-sighted. The little office behind might have been an infinitesimal fraction of the Emporium, but it was one no material damage could possibly have been done to by any amount of British publics, even though they might have been largely composed of expert hooligans or howling children. The fact is, you had to be told the office was there, else you would most probably have overlooked it—"you" being, of course, the privileged

person authorised to enter any of the Empire Porcelain Company's premises other than the showrooms. If you *had* been able to enter the office at all, you would just have caught a glimpse of a few bare boards forming a cell about a couple of inches high, and a foot or two long, with the same approximate width ; in this perfectly undesirable room the wandering eye would have caught a desk, and an imposing collection of ledgers, apparently weighing a ton or so each. A singularly sharp-sighted visitor might even have discovered William Thomas Dorner.

William Thomas, who was generally known as Bilt in the family atmosphere of Sneyd, the model village where he spent his nights trying to make both ends meet, gave the rest of his daily four-and-twenty hours to the satisfaction of his artistic temperament, by poring into the huge columns of figures that majestically filled the pages of the Emporium's ledgers. Imagine a dormouse looking at a megatherium, and you will have an approximate idea of William Thomas ministering to his Company's well-being. There was nothing haughty in his demeanour, nothing that might have led him to be mistaken for a female aristocrat enthroned behind a post-office counter ; he was even known, from time to time, to tighten his lips round the historic remains of a gold-tipped cigarette, while his face would be wreathed in the faintest ghost of a smile—which, as a ghost, was quite fair a thing after all. Now, gold-tipped cigarettes of Bilt's most exclusive brand—the maker's name is something in "padopoulos"—cost something above their weight in gold, in our fair isles, although they may very probably be cheap as dirt in Athens or Constantinople, where paper and tin boxes and gold tips and high-class patents are unknown. And it will

be easily understood that a hundred a year is, after all, but a poor little thing to an accountant whose artistic cravings put him in the way of Thingumbobopadopoulos. There you have the nucleus of the whole question: Bilt was ambitious. Bilt could not do with the beer and skittles that have so long satisfied the British workman; Bilt wanted that peculiar brand of aromatised straw commonly known as Turkish tobacco; he craved for the delicious luxury of large towns and large hotels, commodious chambers with sofas, five electric lights, telephones, easy-chairs, high-class wall-papers and carpets, a staff of frigid valets, experts in the art of closing doors and waiting for orders, and he longed for the spectacular dinners in the same hotels, with their galaxy of lights, of gowned women and men in evening dress, of French names and unknown dishes (you know the sort of things: the "Châteaubriand aux pommes," that turns out to be a bit of steak, or the "Tournedos," that is discovered amazingly like a piece of stewed joint). In fact, Bilt ought to have been a belted earl, or an American millionaire, or at least a musical comedy star or a revue king—but he happened to be a clerk at a hundred a year, replete with the small change of cleverness, but singularly lacking its subtler, thousands-a-year variety.

If Bilt had been a thrifty man, of the Benjamin Franklin type, he would no doubt have married an efficient spinster, and endeavoured to live as comfortably as possible (which is not saying a great deal) on his prosaical income; he would simply have stifled his higher cravings, while he was carrying the baby or wheeling the perambulator. That is what any reasonable, ordinary person would have done; but Bilt was not like you or me, and after having smoked

some thousands of his particular cigarettes, he only felt a keener desire for more.

Now Bilt's artistic money-spending potentialities happened to be more or less known at Sneyd, and even at Bursley, where the average Briton is content to divert himself with a tankard of ale from (or rather at) the nearest pub, and the genuinely inconvenient Saturday night treat at the Empire, with the latest thing in comic songs and revue entertainments. So when it became known that the safe of the Imperial Porcelain Emporium had been found empty one morning by the head cashier of the Company, and that William Thomas Dorner had disappeared, all the wise heads of Bursley might have been seen nodding synchronically, like so many metronomes timed to the same measure. There were about a hundred "I told you so's" to the minute, when the news got all about the town, and at Hillport, the fashionable suburb, you could have seen elegantly-clad females turning up their delicate noses at the so-called "aspirations" of the lower classes. Miss Notchett—a spinster of uncertain age who practically never spoke—was reported to cry out: "What else can you expect of our Government?" and her cook, a stout matron with all the little tricks of deportment that are always developed in her calling, broke an extra china teapot while exclaiming "Oh, Lor!"

And yet, however epoch-making the news of Bilt's disappearance, however brilliantly the "Signal" made use of this soul-thrilling material, with its sensational headings—"An accountant absconded—Missing Man—Police poo-pooed" and so on—the matter was soon permitted to drop, under the still more sensational news of the batting averages of the Bursley C.C., or of the colour of the latest musical comedy

prima-donna's natural hair. Nobody seemed to have the least memory of Bilt—which is very human after all.

But that very little human thing, the Imperial Porcelain Company, whose Bursley Emporium had been done out of two thousand pounds "by some person or persons unknown" (though not unsuspected) kept its memory in far better working order; why, it had experts in memory, men who were quite willing to spend the whole of their days remembering (from 11 to 3), at a purely nominal salary of about a shilling a minute. And one of these experts was entrusted with the job of keeping his mind's eye on William Thomas Dorner, and bringing him back again within range of the Company's purely optical vision.

The expert, being an expert, did not apply to Scotland Yard—did not even for a fraction of a second think of doing so. No, Scotland Yard and he, in a friendly and enthusiastic way, detested each other thoroughly. That is why he decided to hunt down Bilt on his own, and then only to ask the aid of the official service to arrest him in due form.

The very first thing the expert did was to visit Bilt's late cottage at Sneyd, and to enquire about him, casually, and not in such a manner as to make it evident to anyone but a born fool that he was an expert investigator. In somewhat less time than it would take a fluent speaker to say "Jack Robinson," the expert unearthed the only really important fact about Bilt. In a fraction of *that*, his mind was made up: a man with Bilt's artistic temperament would certainly not bolt to a place like London with the money he had temporarily made his; he must seek him somewhere on the continent, in Paris, say—or better still in Northern Italy. And to Northern Italy, accordingly, he set off to seek him.

PART II.

HENRY HARLAND

“What! In the large hotel on the Gran’ Canale?”

“Si, Signore, the palace of the Inglese—the Britannia.”

“And you say he has been there over a fortnight?”

“His Excellency is right.”

“But are you sure he is the man I am looking for—my very dear amico, the friend whose photo you are still holding? Look well, fanciulla mia—I don’t want to make a mistake!”

The little, soft, unkempt, pleasure-loving Italian girl, bent those deceptively womanlike blue eyes of hers towards the photograph she held in her plump, sunburnt, and dirt-smeared hands.

“Of course,” she softly laughed back, “of course—it is my friend Guglielmo. Does the signore come all the way from England to see him?”

“Not quite, cara mia; I was in Italy, and I thought I should find him here. So I came to Venice—and found *you*.”

Your matter-of-fact, stolid, British gentleman, with his clear-cut, dry, soap-and-razor-like features, is slow to unbend: but when he once begins—why,

then, he has *le coeur sur la main*. That was precisely the case with Seton Smith, who had already made a fast friend of little Giuseppina, and managed, in the course of a joyous conversation in the piazzetta, to extract a valuable piece of information—for which he had, in fact, come straight from Bursley, in spite of the words he had just spoken.

“ You see, Giuseppina mia,” he added as an afterthought, “ it is not always advisable to blurt out the truth into every one’s ears. Your mamma and babbo, no doubt, told you that little girls should be seen and not heard, and——”

“ Oh,” cried out her merry, eager, laughing childish voice, “ I know very well when to say nothing !” Her fawn-coloured eyelashes seemed to confirm this subtle talent of hers. “ But I must tell my friend Guglielmo that you have come to see him.”

“ Yes, and spoil the pleasure of a surprise ? ”

“ Oh ! ” This time constrainedly—“ I had not thought of that. But he would be very glad, too, if I told him your Excellency is here . . . Perhaps ? . . . ”

The eager eyes hovered for an instant on the brilliant flower of hope she had suddenly made to blossom out for herself—dazzlingly blue they were, those eyes of a tiny little Venetian maid.

“ There never were such eyes,” thought Seton Smith. “ There never was such a good thing as a surprise,” he said aloud.

“ Well, then,” admitted Giuseppina, “ I want to take a share in it.”

“ Of course, bambina mia. That’s just why I am so glad I found you. ’Tis easy to call on a friend at a large hotel—anyone can do that ; the merest newspaper reporter excels in the art. . . . ”

"I hate newspapers," put in the girl, a small, dignified and naturally charming pout coming across her rosy lips, "they always tell you what you don't want to know, and leave out all the good things. My friend Guglielmo hates them, too."

"No doubt, my child," answered the Englishman. "But, as we were saying, you and I must prepare a grand surprise for our friend."

"Yes," eagerly rejoined the blue-eyed slip of femininity. "If you like, I shall go and meet him at the Lido—I know he often goes across to look at the lagoon—and, when we come back, you can suddenly appear, like a prince in a fairy-tale—or like little Giacomo, when we played at pirates on a desert island! Yes, that would be fine, Ecco!"

"'Tis a very fine notion you've got into your pretty little head," answered Seton Smith. "I, for one, shall appreciate the surprise at its full worth—and your friend Guglielmo will never forget it in all his life . . . You are a little witch, Giuseppina. But tell me: how did you get to know Guglielmo?"

"Oh, that was easy," laughed the diminutive goddess. "I was playing behind the Merceria, with Giacomo, when he came along, as though he were looking for a gondola. I knew at once that he was an Inglese, and I took him to a fine gondolier I know. . . ."

"You seem to know everybody, fanciulla mia!"

"*This* gondolier is Giacomo's father. . . . Well, after that, I saw him every day, and we went for walks together. That is why I knew exactly where he likes to go and where to meet him. I am quite sure he has gone to the Stabilimento this morning, and will return to the palace of the Inglese at sixteen o'clock. . . . You see, my friend Guglielmo is very rich," she added in a shy and demure tone of youthful pride.

"Yes," replied Smith, with the faintest touch of grimness, "he is very rich. . . . And where do you propose me to fall upon him, and give him the best surprise he has ever had?"

"In the Giardino, behind San Servolo," promptly answered the sorceress, - like one well accustomed to play such pranks. "We always get out of the Gondola at San Servolo, and walk to San Giorgio through the public Gardens. There is a little path leading to a fountain: ecco, that is the place. Nobody is there as a rule, and it is just the proper thing to play at surprises."

"Va bene, little witch," replied Seton Smith. "I shall hide behind the orleander, in the shade the sun is kind enough to spread and slant at that hour, and when I see you coming along, I shall jump out like. . . . like little Giacomo, and shout Boo-oo-oo! . . . And *then* you'll laugh! . . . Qui vivra verra!"

"Oh, how nice everything will be!" exclaimed the little girl, clapping her sunburnt and dirty hands. "We shall be there between half past sixteen and a quarter to seventeen. It always takes the same time—I know! How pleased my friend Guglielmo will be!"

"That's right," chuckled the Englishman. "Well, I must be off now, but I won't forget the appointment . . . And don't you forget to buy some sweets," he added, slipping a sovereign into her dirty palms.

"Oh!" Her girlish azure eyes lit up wonderingly in a bewildering, charming, roguish—utterly irresponsible and not-to-be resisted—a rippling, girlish divine smile, that was a reflection of the sky above and of the silvery waves below—a smile that cut off the answer ready on her lips, and expressed far more than any mere words could do.

And the Englishman, laughing softly, departed, nodding to his odd and mischievous accomplice.

On that same afternoon, in the pleasant Public Gardens filled with the subtle odours of orange-trees and tamarin, among the playful shadows of ilexes and orleanders, one might have heard the voices of merry, quaint, old-fashioned southern children, busily engaged in games of quaint descriptions, while passers-by looked gaily on for a moment, and more often than not joined in the hearty exclamations that filled the air. Your southern person, with his blood rushing readily to all his limbs, is apt to give vent to his private feelings in a manner no self-respecting English gentleman would approve of—and yet none the less charming for that.

Just beside a little, sandy, shadowy, smiling path, that wound itself right up to the spluttering, sparkling, laughing fountain, behind a gaunt old oleander, the king of oleanders, stood Seton Smith, well hidden among the ever-changing shadows, his anxious gaze darting right or left from time to time, in expectation of his new-found friend.

He espied her from afar, hand in hand with a tall young man, who appeared strangely out of place in this paradise of a Venetian garden—a tall fellow, who appeared to answer curtly the evidently numerous questions with which his youthful companion inexhaustingly plied him; not an Italian, one could see at first glance, despite the bronze hue beginning to smother his northern pallor—and smoking a gold-tipped cigarette whose silver-grey curling wreaths wandered lazily up into the clear blue sky.

Giuseppina and her friend, whom Seton Smith (egregious circumstance) had no difficulty in recognising as the original of the photograph he had showed

the little girl that very morning, came along the little path, chattering gaily (at least *she* was chattering gaily), with the air of *promeneurs* well used to their surroundings; yet one could see an air of unusual excitement and animation in the young, blue, usually careless and absurdly beautiful little eyes. She went on talking wildly, right up to the king of oleanders she had mentioned as a trysting place to her latest friend, the other rich Inglese. As they came opposite the tree, Seton Smith's lithe form shot out from behind the heavy shadows, and he laid his firm and sinewy hand on the other's shoulder.

"I'm afraid the game's up, Mr. William Thomas Dorner," he said in a peculiarly quiet voice. "No, don't move, I've got you covered with my revolver . . . That's better. You see, my friend Giuseppina quite inadvertently put me on to your tracks, and being an *élève de Sherlock Holmes*, I promised her to give you a surprise—the surprise of your life. . . . I think I have been successful?"

"Damn you!" angrily let out the wretched man.

"Don't mind *me*," replied Seton Smith. "'Tis no business of yours, what becomes of me in post-terrestrial times. . . . Come, now, will you follow me quietly, or do you want me to handcuff you? You'd better avoid a row—'twill do you no good."

"All right," said Dorner sullenly, with a droop of his heavy, tired, restless eyelids, "I'll follow you."

"You see, *bambina mia*," added Seton Smith, turning to the bewildered and completely startled little Italian girl, "your friend Guglielmo has lately left his English home, carrying with him fifty thousand lire that belong to his employers. Now he is coming back with me to get his deserts. . . . And you had better run along and play with little Giacomo."

PART III.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Between the village of Moretonbridge and the hamlet of Posthampstead, there runs a track that looks straight at the eastern arm of Dart opposite Pittimerry Hill. The road flies over the impressive shoulder of Heddymore Tor, jumps clean into a pit that yawns on one side of the hill, bounds back round its base, and finally jumps across Dart over an ancient bridge about half a mile before touching Posthampstead.

Now, just opposite the silent mass of Heddymore Tor, which shuts out the sun soon after noon all along the eastern slope of the land, there shall be seen a turf hut, such as shepherds employ at eaning time. The walls of this dwelling are old and weather-beaten, and there shall presently appear upon them an irregular frieze of holes that gape and leer, with their sightless eyes and toothless mouths. The roof of thatch has crumbled down in places; rotted wood-work will be seen lying about, seasoned into the same colour as most of the lichened walls, where glimmer wonderful fabrics of cryptogamous vegetation. Here flourishes "reindeer-moss," that works its delicate

patterns into the peering eyeless sockets through which the heathy wind loves to come whistling along ; here dwells the cladonia, its flaming gold weaving lace-work on the bare grey of other lichens, and lighting up the green setting of true mosses and various creepers. On the outlying heath, too, humble vegetations cover the granite blocks, in the dark crannies of which the bittern and the jackdaw build their nests, while screech-owls send forth their ghostly cry into the night.

Generations of shepherds have used this hut, that has been several times struck down by lightning, or otherwise destroyed and built up again, thanks to spontaneous subscriptions of kind neighbours. The smith, at Moretonbridge, who is well-nigh sixty years old, has told me, in his nervous Anglo-Saxon, which still rings in my ears, how he remembers old Ezekiel, the last one to inhabit the tumble-down place—which was already crumbling in his own boyhood. Neglect had now added itself to decay, and nobody thought of living in such a mouldy place. In spite of everything, however, the hut, though empty, is not so deserted as one might think : the place still has a hearth of sorts, with its heap of grey ashes, while a pile of sundry bottles and empty boxes look askance at him who would be bold enough to enter by day.

The ruined hut is haunted, moreover, and you may find those who still believe in the ghosts that assemble there before departing on their nightly errand to Barrow Farm. Not a woodman or a shepherd would be seen nigh the place when the moon is out, and although none will positively swear to have seen an apparition, there are none that disbelieve in them, save perhaps the younger generation that has grown too matter-of-fact to fancy and too sceptical to deny.

It is natural that a tumble-down and desolate place like Heddymore Hut should harbour the non-descript flotsam that happen to pass across such a wild tract of land as Dartmoor ; more than one fugitive has sought under its crumbling roof a night's shelter against God's wrath, and many are those who have halted 'mid its battered walks long enough to catch their second breath.

It was not particularly amazing, therefore, that little Mary Oldhouse should find the old hut occupied when she peeped into it one warm evening in May, when the ling was already flowering among the furze, and the sphagnum bog gave out its pregnant fragrance. Mary was the daughter of John Oldhouse, the owner of Barrow Farm, and resembled her father as little as it is given to nature to manage. The former, a sturdy, six-foot British countryman, seemed to embody everything that England stands for : stern-featured and ruddy-complexioned, he was the picture of bodily vigour and tenacious hardihood. His daughter was a frail little maid, whose butterfly existence spent itself on Dartmoor, fluttering about from vale to Tor, from farm to hamlet, up along the hundred slopes, and down the slanting hills. She had often paid flying visits to the old shepherd's hut, and was a firm believer in the ghosts that were said to haunt it. Moreover, she was not in the least afraid of them, being universally petted and loved by every man, woman, and beast upon the moor. It was true she had never met anyone at all in her ramblings to the tumble-down hut. So, to-night, when she found herself looking upon a gaunt and mud-besmeared human form, sitting on a pile of mouldy wood, she expressed some girlish astonishment, but no genuine fear.

" Well ! " she exclaimed at length, as the unknown

figure stared at her unsympathetically, " I knawed as we'm gotten ghosts up about. Faither ban't right when 'e doan't b'lieve they'm on Dartymoor. An' 'ere be one, butivul, an' all, biding anigh me. Us knawed as they'm gert witty,* wise an' good."

" Stop your fool's talk, you silly girl ! " angrily retorted the mysterious figure. " You'd better help me to light a fire in this beastly crumbling place ! "

" If you'm angry wi' me, 'twon't help 'e much wi' a fire," Mary laughed back. " Why, I never did hear tell on a ghost as axed for warmth, seein' as it ought to have catched enough where it comes from. But it ban't like a good darter to refuse when she be bidden. Besides, I be gert wi' kitchen fires to home, an' e' shall see jest what us can be catched doin'."

The maid came forward, genuinely amused at so strange a request from what she believed to be nothing but a fleshless phantom. In doing so, however, her dainty little foot came in contact with a large hob-nailed boot, and she uttered a sharp cry of surprise in which for the first time fear played a part.

" Oh ! So 'e ban't a real ghost, maister ! An' what may 'e be doin' in the shepherd's hut this time o' night ? "

" Who told you I was a ghost ? " answered the stranger, less unkindly than he had spoken before. " Whatever I may be, you made a very acceptable proposal just now : I'm sure you must be a much better hand at lighting a fire than I can ever hope to be, and as I'm in sorrowful need of a blaze, it would be a real kindness on your part to get one up for me."

" Ess fay," said the girl. " But 'e must first tell

* Witty—wise.

me who 'e be. There's not many as would bide in this hut at this hour o' day, an' if 'e doan't answer me first, 'tis not for me to light the fires o' the likes of 'e. . . . You'm not from Dartymoor, neither: 'e doan't talk like us."

"True, my dear," retorted the unknown. "I happen to be from a little place called Sneyd, a good long way from here, though you've probably heard of it: it's quite near Bursley—and that's where they make the crockery."

"That be no answer. . . . An' what might your name be? Us knows the names of all people on Dartymoor, an' if 'e wants me to light your fire, 'e must tell me who 'e be an' why 'e be here too."

"Well, then, little Miss Inquisitive," laughingly replied the man, "my name is Dorner, and I'm out here. . . er . . . for my health. And now," he added rather hastily, "I believe I've earned the right to your own name and to your help."

"Ess," said Mary Oldhouse, telling him her name in her fresh, girlish voice, while she set to work with scraps of wood and bits of straw which her dainty fingers, aided by a match Dorner handed her silently, soon kindled into a blaze. He put his hands greedily to the generous warmth that sprang up from the hearth, and she gazed at him for some moments without a word. Still keeping near the fire, he began looking at her in his turn, while the faintest blush sprang upon her dimpled cheeks. Then he began speaking in a low, musical voice, the like of which she had never heard before, accustomed as she was to the coarser West-Anglian tongue spoken by the farmers and the peasants who inhabit Dartmoor.

"I must acknowledge your very welcome services, little Mary; and at the same time you force

me to declare there are some remarkably pretty little maids in these parts. Why, many an Italian beauty would envy you your grey eyes and rosy cheeks, and I am sure Monna Lisa's smile would faint before your own ! ”

“ I be sure as I doan't knaw anything of Monna Leeza,” retorted the girl, “ but there be a many men as 'd not speak to me like 'e. An' if faither was anigh, an' catched 'e to ut, maybe he'd not like it either. Us doan't knaw to say gert butivul things ; an' why for should us ? ” Yet she did not look angry, in spite of the rebuke. And presently she went on : “ If 'e promise not to say any more o' they silly things about my eyes or my cheeks, I'd not mind taking of 'e back to Barrow Farm, where 'e could get a decent meal an' a better bed than what 'e'll ever get in the old shepherd's hut. Faither ban't the man to refuse a fellow creetur a shelter an' a morsel to eat.”

“ My dear,” replied the man, “ I am afraid I can make no call on your hospitality just at present. But if you could tell me the shortest cut to Plymouth, I'd be truly grateful. The fact is, I have some rather important business to transact, and . . . er . . . I must not remain about here longer than is absolutely necessary.”

At the same time he drew a box of cigarettes from his shabby coat, and proceeded to light one of them at the already waning fire. Mary noticed the light golden colour of the tobacco, and also the gold ring that tipped the white paper where he drew it to his lips. Through the gaping coat she also caught sight of a hideous-looking design, that had grown familiar to her accustomed eyes, though she had never seen the like on any living man before. She uttered a sharp exclamation of dismay.

“ ‘E ban’t one o’ they prison convicts ? ” she cried. “ Gaffer Prote often told me as they’m escaping from Princetown gaol, but I’d never ‘a thought as I’d see un, an’ take ‘im for a ghost—an’ all not a mile up along o’ the old farm.”

“ Look here, Mary,” the stranger said, more seriously than he had ever spoken before. “ You’ve found out my secret—but I’m sure *you* wouldn’t harm me ! Surely those rosy lips of yours were not made to raise the hue and cry against an innocent man who has managed to escape hard and unjust gaolers ! Surely, your fairy eyes would not like to see me caged within those terrible prison walls ! Come, I am at your mercy : you will not kill my new-born hope ! ”

She appeared truly moved by his words, and reflected a long time before she answered. Then her reply came in faltering tones, giving voice to the thoughts that had kept her silent.

“ Hold hard : this axes a lot of thinking about. You’m an escaped prisoner, and if I don’t tell on ‘e, I can never look up to faither’s eyes no more—ess fay . . . All the same, if I hadn’t come over to the hut to-night, but stayed quietly at home, I shouldn’t have seen ‘e, and nobody else would have caught ‘e to-night. But why for be ‘e a convict, dressed up like a mommet* in a field ? ”

“ My dear,” gently replied the escaped convict “ once the law gets hold of you, it’s a hard thing to justify one’s conduct. However, I don’t mind telling *you* I was in the clutches of a big company that did its best to ruin me—yes, and had succeeded too, if Heaven had not been kind at last by putting you across my path ! . . . Mary, little Mary, you are all the world to

* Mommet—scarecrow.

me. I love you, Mary, I love you with all the strength of my battered body, with all the yearning of my unchainable soul !

Though I had never heard thy name,
I know thee from afar,
And thou shalt guide to life and fame,
Mine own, my shining star ! ”

Now he was on his knees before the girl, for he saw only the light of kindness in her tender eyes. Ten minutes ago, she little knew what strange adventure would befall her : instead of the ghastly apparitions that failed of any audience, she was now confronted with a man, a cultured man, whose polished speech was unlike any of those she had met before, whose voice was pleading for his liberty and life, while the floating breeze outside brought all the fragrance of the moor to her childish senses, awakening for the first time to the talk of love.

“ Why, you be talking like they do in books ! ” she exclaimed. But she did not push him away from her, and her voice was more than uncommon tearful, proving to demonstration that the stranger, whatever his wrongs, had found his way to her heart.

He stroked her golden curls, and took her in his arms. Outside, night had already fallen, wrapping up the gaunt tors in its huge mantle of murky darkness. Close by, the lapping, rippling Dart loosened the pinch at Mary Oldhouse’s heart : she reflected with surprise that she was giving up all her past life of wandering and roaming, all Dartmoor’s gentle summer fragrance and winter harshness, to this man, who had been but a stranger to her a few minutes ago, but who was now dearer to her than all her dreams of golden days.

Hand in hand, they left the hut : on the desolate Moor, a granite cross seemed to indicate the way to safety, as it had, of old, pointed out the road to many an abbot walking from monastery to monastery. They went very slowly at first, for she did not wish to reach her father's farm till every one was fast asleep. Nobody would miss her : she had often spent the night at some distant neighbours'. Her mind was fully made up, and nothing could make her waver in her purpose.

That same night, the fugitives, after having passed the new hostelry at Two Bridges, and the old Saracen's Head, reached the landing-place at Davenport Hard, where Dorner easily found a small sailing tramp on which they both embarked, well out of the clutches of the law, and ready to face the lapping waves and unknown coasts for which she was bound.

PART IV.

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD

It will be remembered by all Captain John Good's friends (and they are legions) that he was no mean traveller, hunter, and explorer ; indeed, he undertook several expeditions into the wilds of Southern Africa, and accompanied his particular friend, Sir Henry Curtis, on the quest that eventually revealed both his long-lost brother and King Solomon's carefully hidden treasure. It will therefore astonish no one that his son Tom should have inherited a similar taste for adventures in unknown countries, though this is a thing that might well be disputed. Be this as it may, young Tom Good was born and bred a big game hunter and an ardent traveller. He especially haunted the precincts his father had explored with old Alan Quatermain, and, in fact, made several trips out to Africa, both before and since the war ; between these roving travels, which would last for any period of time, between a few months and several years, he would come back to his old English home, where I often enjoyed his genial hospitality. It was during one of my visits to him that I happened to mention the name of one William Dorner, a fraudulent clerk, who had

been skilfully arrested in Venice, after having absconded with two thousand pounds belonging to his employers, brought back to England, and sentenced to three years' hard labour ; he had been wily enough to break prison, and to escape from Dartmoor—to Africa, it was presumed ; nothing further had been heard about him. But the singular fact about his escape was the simultaneous disappearance from Dartmoor of a young girl, Mary Oldhouse, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, of whom nothing was known since the time of this extraordinary occurrence. I had mentioned Dorner quite casually, in the middle of an unremarkable conversation, and was surprised to see my friend start suddenly as the name caught his ear.

“ What, Dorner ? ” he exclaimed, “ William Thomas Dorner ? ”

“ Yes, I believe those are his names,” I answered, “ and most ordinary they are, too. Do you happen to know him ? ”

“ Why, I actually met him and his wife in South Africa—at least I met a man who called himself Rorden, and told me his real name was Dorner. . . . Perhaps the story would interest you ? Well, here goes.” And he broke into the following narrative, which I have tried to set down as nearly as possible in his own words :

“ It was while I was out lion-hunting near Miner's Rest in the Transvaal. Do you know Miner's Rest ? Well, you certainly lose nothing by it ; it's the ugliest, dustiest, beastliest place ever contaminated by the scum of civilisation and the worst of barbarity. However, I didn't remain there very long : I only took time to engage a couple of Kaffirs and an ox-waggon, which, by the way, is far worse in quality and twice as dear,

in such a place, than in any decent city near the coast, though that is a saying that might well be disputed—especially by the half-Zulu, half-Dutchman, who transacts the bargain. Anyhow, I set out into the interior, towards the Limpopo, with my little caravan, hoping to settle a couple of lions at best, and, in case of extra bad luck, to spend some fairly active and wholesome weeks, at any rate.

“I remember my father often telling me how old Alan Quatermain used to feel lonely in our European crowds where he knew no one, while the silence of an equatorial forest was good enough company for him. Well, I feel just the same, and I can tell you the banks of the Limpopo are far better company than the empty snobbish set that flock to London or Paris. It is impossible for me to conceive loneliness in the middle of an African hunting ground, with a Westly-Richards slung across my shoulder and an ample provision of .507 express bullets in my cartridge belt.

“The oxen, I remember, had given us no end of trouble during that little trip. There is nothing more stupid than a bullock, and they are apt to be a regular nuisance when once they make up their minds. Trekking is not altogether a bed of roses, I can tell you, and I’ve done my full share of it, too. To begin with, one of our beasts had managed to eat some plant or other that disagreed with its constitution, and we had been obliged to put a bullet through it. Another had actually gone astray during the night, and what we found left of it, next day, proved that it had made a good supper to some preying lion that had been cheeky enough to come near our camp without being spotted, or even scented. Moreover, Jock, the elder of my Kaffirs, was not an eminently reliable fellow, as I had ample reasons to ascertain later on. The

other, who responded to the musical name of Tim-Tim, was quite a different sort, with whom I have since gone through many adventures, and most curious some of them were.

“ Well, this particular trip didn’t seem to turn out peculiarly well, what with one thing and another ; we lost some of our flour, I remember, crossing a ford that happened to be deeper than we supposed. The day after, however, we found a pretty little stream, flowing between banks green with maidenhair fern, wild asparagus, and many other beautiful grasses. Moreover, game seemed rather plentiful in the neighbourhood : the plains on the northern side of our stream were swarming with springbock and blesbuck, and many varieties of quazza and vilderbeeste. The beauty of the place and the richness of its fauna made me resolve to stay there a few days, in the hope that we might come across a few odd lions, which are sure to be about, in those latitudes, wherever they find a good hunting ground.

“ We established our *skerm* (1) on the banks of the stream, and very pleasant it was, what with the bathing in the deep current, the fresh and bracing air, full of the fragrance of sugar bushes and wild mimosa, and the promise of good sport in the very near future. I told you just now I never felt lonely in an African forest ; and so it happened that I was quietly sitting on a large stone some distance away from my camp, spending a very pleasant evening all by myself, with no other companion than my pipe. The moon was shining like a silver disc, and it was glorious to see its lithe rays mingle light and shadows in a way no painter could ever approach. Indeed, it would require somebody with more words on the tip of his tongue

(1) Rough enclosure.

than I shall ever have, to describe such a scene as it deserves ; so I will not even attempt to do so.

“Tim-Tim was cooking some impala-steaks from a buck I had shot in the afternoon—a remarkable case, I remember, of a .570 express bullet passing clean through the heart—and presently a long, low moaning sound was suddenly heard through the growth of many-coloured vegetation—and most remarkable it was in the silence of the night. It seemed to come from so far away, and my first thought was to look around for some wild animal that might have strayed near the camp. I saw nothing, however, and the moaning went on, interrupted by long periods of strange and ominous silence. Then came a distant rumbling, louder and louder, as of a waggon approaching ; and presently I *did* see a waggon in the far distance. It seemed incredible that anyone should be trekking at that time of the night ; evidently it was a fugitive or an inexperienced hand. At first I refused to believe my senses, what with the moonshine, which is apt to be tricky at times, and with the murmur of the wind in the bushes ; soon, however, I was obliged to believe my eyes and ears, for there was a great big waggon, drawn by four oxen, nearly opposite my skerm, just across the river. A man was walking abreast, a white man, though he was considerably sunburnt (this much had I made out in the moonlight) ; and he was smoking a cigarette. He had probably espied our camp-fire from afar ; anyhow, he halted his team just opposite the place where I was sitting, and cried out to me in a tired sort of voice :

“Hullo ! Are you English ? ”

“Yes,” I answered looking intently at him—You see I didn’t want to commit myself with a perfect stranger, and at the same time, you can’t stand on

ceremony on the banks of the Limpopo as on those of the Thames.

"I'm English too," he answered, "and in a sorry plight. I've lost all my beastly niggers, and my wife's ill and lying in the waggon: could you lend me a hand in crossing this stream?"

"His appeal to me was not to be refused, whatever he may have been. You can't ignore a white man in trouble in the middle of an African forest. Besides, the extraordinary fact of his having a woman with him would have been enough to secure any help I might have been able to give. So I called to Jock and Tim-Tim to cross the stream and catch hold of the disselboom, to help the cart cross back; which they accordingly proceeded to do.

"And then occurred the unexpected, and a wild scene it was, I can tell you. Hardly had my two kaffirs begun turning the Englishman's unwilling team towards our camp, when there arose a mighty roar, this time alarmingly near me. Turning round, I saw a huge lion. bellowing with rage, and evidently in great pain: it had sprung upon a part of the buck Tim-Tim had begun to prepare for dinner, and had spitted itself on the impala that served for the cooking. I jumped up, caught hold of my trusty Westly-Richards that I never allowed to stray out of my reach, and let fly at the brute. The bullet certainly did not miss its mark, as I ascertained from renewed roars; however, it failed to hit a vital part, and the beast slunk away, still bellowing ominously. I thought it best not to follow, what between its being well-nigh the middle of the night, and my hearing another dreadful noise just at the same moment: there was the waggon in the middle of the stream, with my two kaffirs and the Englishman driving the unwilling team. The

second ox on the left side, evidently more frightened than the others, let out a wild whoop of terror, and suddenly skreked (1) loose from its leather bands ; at the same time, the disselboom of the cart went crash into a boulder that seemed to have been placed there on purpose. All was a scene of confusion : Tim-Tim and Jock were swearing at the other oxen, that were all three of them moaning dreadfully, while the Englishman shouted wild abuse at everybody and everything, and a softer voice arose from inside the waggon, shrieking in an agony of fright. I registered a quiet oath to see the thing through, when, to crown all, the stray bullock suddenly reappeared on my side of the stream : there came a mighty roar, a piercing, ear-splitting howl, and suddenly the wounded lion came bounding on the poor brute's back. In less time than it takes to describe it, I let fly from my Westly-Richards—and none too soon either. Even as it was, however, there was plenty of mischief done, as you will see at once : my bullet hit the lion full in the head, killing him instantly, but the monster's impetus was such that it fell with its victim, still gripping it with its powerful claws, right into the very middle of the striving team of oxen. The confusion was indescribable, of course, but that was not the worst part of it. After we had managed to clear away the mess, and to disentangle what remained of the oxen, the waggon and men, I was the first to notice that my unknown fellow-countryman had struck headforemost on to the boulder ; there he lay quite senseless, and I was making ready to pick him up as gently as I could, when the rock suddenly gave way, rolled on to the shore, and disclosed a sort of pit that looked astonishingly like the entrance to an underground tunnel. I told Tim-Tim

(1) To skrek—To break loose from the trek tow.

to examine the hole with care, while I carried the unconscious man to the fire ; I laid him down on a blanket, and his wife, who had got out of the cart, nursed him back to consciousness : it did not last long, however ; that was the moment he gave me his name. I expect he felt death stealing over him, for very soon he said : " Friend, I told you my name was Rorden ; well, that was a lie, and it's not the time now for keeping it up. My real name is William Thomas Dorner, and my unworthy life has already been saved once by that lady," he pointed to the woman who held him in her arms ; " she is not my lawful wife, but Heaven knows she could not have been dearer to me, or acted more bravely and tenderly, if we had been regularly married. Promise me you will treat her gently and see her back to England..." His voice died out at that point, while the woman was in tears ; however, I gave the required promise, and I noticed the look of relief that came into his eyes ; then he sank down softly, turned a little to one side, and lay still.

" Little remains to be told. The stroke of ill-luck that killed Dorner proved the means of my providing amply for his widow—I am sure I may call her such. She was a Dartmoor girl, and her accent, I remember, was most amusing to my unsophisticated ears. Well, as I said just now, when I saw the hole left open by the dislodged boulder, I told Tim-Tim to go and see what it was. Some time later, he came back crying : " Look Inkoos ! " and carrying something bright in his palm : I looked at the object and saw it was a necklace of massive gold. So, as soon as we had disposed of the dead man, and of the lion that had caused all the turmoil, after having made things shipshape in the camp, I went by myself to have a good look at the pit,

and most remarkable a place I discovered it to be. It was a regular treasure chamber, as I made out from some inscriptions I found on large stone boxes, as big as Egyptian sarcophages : here, I managed to read, was the long lost treasure of King Monolos, of whom so many legends circulated in the middle-ages, and now almost forgotten ; here was a find worth thousands, perhaps millions of pounds ! Of course, it would have taken several months to exhaust the treasure, and it would have been necessary to organize a digging expedition on quite a large scale, a thing I immediately proposed doing, the haul being the rightful possession of Mrs. Dorner—for so I prefer to call her. However, she would hear of nothing of the kind, and, as I myself am sufficiently well-off to end my days without knowing want, we simply let the matter drop. The golden necklace which Tim-Tim had brought back, she accepted, however, and I sold it for her at Pretoria for two thousand pounds—a pretty sum, as you see. With this money she set out for England, and I have since heard that she is living happily in a little Dartmoor village.”

HENRY SETON MERRIMAN

THE REAPERS

CHAPTER I

“ On a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi.”

IN the very heart of busy, bustling Paris, the Rue Vivienne seems to stand out by itself for its narrowness, combined with the large amount of traffic that passes between its double row of six-storeyed houses. From five or six in the morning, when the first auto-buses begin to thunder through its restless depth, far out into the sleeping night, it is thronged with noisy vans, haughty taxis, and a swarm of busy pedestrians, absorbed “hommes d'affaires,” well dressed clerks, brokers one and all, on their way to or from that high temple of pecuniary gods—the Bourse. They walk in groups, smile their enigmatic smiles, while from time to time, a hint that may be worth a fortune drops from their otherwise sealed lips ; they have lunched at Champeaux's or Tabary's, they have taken their apéritif, and you naturally would suppose they leave this pulsating corner of the city as soon as their Temple closes its doors for the day.

Yet the Rue Vivienne is as crowded at five as it is at noon, as seething at eight as it is at five. Which is easily explained on the ground that after business comes pleasure.

The first and deadliest sign of decay a city quarter may give is the stealthy dying out of the pleasure grounds that used to flourish within its bounds. Which tends to prove that the quarter of the Bourse is in full life. For not only is it a centre of finance in the day, but it becomes the very heart of Paris for pleasure in the night ; it is the centre of gravity of theatres and music-halls, from the Seine to Montmartre, and from the Madeleine to the Place de la République. And the bustling financier fills so well his vocation, that he automatically transforms himself into the foremost "viveur" or the most professed "boulevardier" at the stroke of the hour that keeps him, till the following day, outside his business-haunts. Though little dreamt of in England, such a transformation exists, and is the strongest and simplest reason for the lasting bustle of the Rue Vivienne.

The street itself, as all the world knows—or pretends to know, being a very ignorant and very vain world—runs perpendicular from the Boulevards to the Bourse, pursuing its unswerving course right down to the faded Palais-Royal ; and the corner of the Boulevards is not ten houses distant from the Théâtre des Variétés, where you get the wittiest laugh in the world. And till about one o'clock in the morning you may see it filled with belated theatre-goers, pretty women, and the usual flotsam that haunt the fashionable pleasure resorts of a great city.

Along this street, one fine night in May, M. Ambroise Dancart was pacing his solitary steps. Monsieur Dancart, with his little pointed beard, and

his carefully waxed moustache, was not the type of man you would naturally expect to meet at such an hour and in such a place ; though no dandy, he was presentably clad in evening dress, which protruded from under his light grey overcoat, creating in the brain of the placid *sergent de ville*, who saw him pass along, an impression of stolid respectability, distant alike from the foppishness of those youths of our generation who loll in deep chairs with their knees higher than their heads, and from the unnecessary severity of so many elderly Englishmen. He was of middle height, rather small than otherwise, and had it not been for his obviously curt manner of one who observes everything and forgets nothing, the most remarkable thing about him was that he was quite unremarkable. He might have been about forty years of age, judging from the slight stoop of his back and the absence of grey in his beard and what was visible of his hair. There was something, moreover, in the grim set of his tightly-pressed lips, that suggested secrecy and victory over self. In short, Monsieur Dancart belonged to that race of Frenchmen who are pleased to defy the time-worn caricature which too many so-called "humorous" artists have circulated among alien nations. As he calmly walked along the pavement, his glistening grey eyes bespoke that insight into human nature which alone makes a great hunter or a great captain. He had come down the Boulevard Montmartre, dodging leisurely among the compact mass of pedestrians who crowded it at that hour when the theatres were disgorging their hundreds of spectators ; there he had felt like an eel in the hand of an angler, never so happy as when it slips away in the very nick of time. Then, at the corner of the Rue Vivienne, he had suddenly turned to the left down

the little street, out of the glare of the powerful lamps that change night into day on the Boulevards.

It is dangerous, however, for an eel to dodge too much ; one last turn, one last wriggle, and the fish is caught—just like in the game of repartee, where one ultimate thrust is at last parried and thrown back into the fencer's very heart. As Monsieur Dancart came abreast of the glass-covered and dimly-lit Passage des Panoramas, a tall and obviously blonde figure suddenly darted from out of the passage, meeting the Frenchman just as the circus-rider meets the horse galloping round the ring.

" You had better follow me quietly," said the newcomer, in an undertone of French which had a slight accent, such as Germans never overcome. His manner of speaking, though quiet to the verge of placidity, was unusual enough to be remembered later, and there was something of a too obtrusive noiselessness in the mode of his approach.

Dancart turned to face the stranger who addressed him. There is none so ready with an answer as your habitually silent man, and the little Frenchman's lips hardly moved as he whispered : " Ah ! Meyer ! I thought you would turn up round here, but I am armed, and——" The end of his sentence was lost in a low, gurgling sound, as he limply dropped into the tall man's arms. A careful observer might have noticed the handkerchief clasped in the newcomer's tightly-closed fist, when first he came upon Dancart ; he would have seen the clenched hand slowly open, the white cambric thrust forward under the Frenchman's nose, and would not have failed to perceive the sickening smell that, for an instant, pervaded that corner of the atmosphere just before he sank upon the other's breast. The tall man swiftly and silently

carried his victim into a taxi that was waiting opposite, and noiselessly drove off.

The whole scene had been enacted so quickly, so little noise had been made, that not even the stolid *sergent de ville* could have dreamt that here was anything but the chance encounter of two belated friends driving off together. Which happened to be a fact ; though the tall kidnapper failed to notice a dark figure behind one of the lighted windows of an *entresol* opposite, who had stood peering at the rapid drama, and hurriedly opened the window as the taxi moved away.

CHAPTER II

“ A renard, renard et demi.”

THE harbour terminus of a railway line is not a fashionable resort of wealth or beauty, for though wealth and beauty pass below its roof on their way to or from waiting trains, they do little else but pass indeed, without entertaining for a minute the idea of remaining there at all.

The Gare Maritime at Calais, built at the foot of the wooden pier that reaches far out into the Channel, is as typical an instance as any other ; moreover, as it happens to be out of direct or easy communication with the town itself, it is usually deserted. For facility of communication is the key-note of activity, and makes for the nine-tenths of that greatly debased and slandered valuable—success. For at least twenty hours of the twenty-four, the station appears empty, its platforms unoccupied by anything but stray dogs or wandering explorers ; there is no sound but the distant rumble of a shunting goods train or the angry toot of a steamer leaving or entering the quiet harbour. Were it not for the columns of smoke that arise from the numerous chimneys, and the obtrusive posters stuck up everywhere—posters advertising the numerous and other-

wise unrecognised advantages of various bathing resorts—Continental or British,—one might believe the place to be abandoned, like the station of some ultra-modern fairy-tale princess condemned by a cruel stepmother to sleep through endless years. In the other four hours, however, the Gare Maritime is a real bedlam of activity. In the shade of the arcades, at the corners of the buildings, at the booking-offices, at the entrance to the buffet or the customs searching hall, men stand in groups. There you will see flocks of railway porters and commissionaires, apparently sprung up from nowhere ; the little stall of the news vendor suddenly opens into a galaxy of cosmopolitan literature ; clerks run bustling about from one office to another ; there you may see podgy little interpreters hailing one another in a language that is a mixture of French, as it is spoken by Parisian guttersnipes, and that English that seems to be the national property of costermongers. You will not fail to come across the inevitable retired sailor who clings for ever to the bustle of arrivals and departures in which he used to play more active a part ; for a man never loses the taste for that peculiar branch of slavery to which he was addicted so many years. There are also the stray travellers from the town itself waiting for the train or the steamer that is to convey them to other shores, and a score of anxious friends or relatives awaiting somebody's arrival. This bustle and life recurs, of course, at those hours of day or night when the Dover boats are due to come and leave, with their indispensable half dozen trains to and from Paris, Cologne, Bâle, and other continental towns. It reaches its maximum in the very first hours after noon, when two such crises more or less interfere with one another, melting into one longer period of life, babble and noise.

The first act of any importance in this succession of events is the arrival of the first Dover boat, which is, of course, preceded by the preparing of the three or four trains into which its passengers are to be discharged, on the every natural grounds that they must go somewhere. As soon as the boat comes up against the landing pier, it is taken possession of by the army of porters, commissionaires, and interpreters, who were calmly awaiting the event, and there follows a pandemonium of cosmopolitan talk compared to which Babel must have been child's play. Then comes the disembarking of the ever numerous passengers—typical Englishmen for the most part, with their countless portmanteaux and golf clubs—which is, after all, not so very unlike closing-time outside a large factory. The travellers are made to pass through the customs hall, where their belongings are duly searched by seedy-looking officials who appear to revel in the havoc they are playing with other people's possessions, after which they are allowed to settle down in their appropriate trains, to await the hour of departure in the dining car or in the station refreshment rooms. Some—a very short minority, of course—are actually bound for Calais itself, and drive off in the antique cabs which were no doubt old when the first steamer made its apparition in the Straits. A smaller minority still do not go on at all, their business taking them no further than the Gare Maritime; for the world is, after all, but the place where you have your business to transact.

Among the latter unusual minority, one fine day in May, was a tall Englishman who seemed to know his way about sufficiently to dispense with the noisy services offered by the multifarious porters and commissionaires. He could do without them all the

better as he had no other luggage but a very small dressing-case which he easily carried in his left hand, while his right was sufficiently free to proffer the tickets and other flotsam required of him by the numerous officials that preside over these ceremonies. His was the typical British face, rather pale of complexion, with blue eyes deeply set under a wide forehead, while a stray curl of flaxen hair was apparent under the rim of his cloth cap. A quiet, restful man, this, whom the ignorant would call phlegmatic, while those few who see below the surface know that the restful man is he whose life's task is well within the compass of his ability. Of such a type was Stuart Rawdon, whose one and only aim seemed to be the minding of his own business—which he did remarkably well. A silent man, moreover, one of those men who, if they have anything to say, say it, but if they have nothing, remain silent.

There are many talkers in this noisy world of ours, and it has become a truism to state that activity and babble are in inverse ratio to one another. The doers are not those that prattle ; and although it does not follow that silence means activity, nobody will dispute that taciturnity spells purpose.

Stuart Rawdon quickly passed through the crowd that thronged the landing pier and the customs hall, and walked straight to the buffet, like one who knows what he wants and where he goes. He sat down at a small table that commanded a view both of the whole dining room and of the arcade without, and calmly proceeded to order a healthy lunch. A woman *en voyage* never eats what she would at home ; a man never eats anything different ; which is, of course, but one way of illustrating the " eternal feminine." Now, however, the simple steak on Rawdon's plate pro-

claimed him a man in the full sense of the word, and from the manner in which he did justice to it, you naturally would conclude that he was looking forward to some important business that might exclude the possibility of indulging another meal for some time to come. His lunch finished, he drew a slip of paper from his coat-pocket, a white telegram at which he glanced with the air of one who is already in complete possession of its contents, and only wishes to make sure of every minutest detail. He thrust back the slip into his pocket, looked at the clock, and got up as a heavy rush and fumble betokened the arrival of a train in front of the station building. It was the boat-express from Paris, timed to a nicety, and after a few seconds began the inevitable rush of passengers and porters, this time towards the steamer that was making ready to convey them to England.

Rawdon cast a longside glance at the seething crowd; a spark flickered for an instant in his dreamy eyes, and he quietly walked out of the buffet, through the corridor-entrance of a first class compartment, and laid his heavy hand on the shoulder of a tall and obviously blonde passenger hurrying towards the other exit. The man turned a nonplussed face towards the unexpected Englishman—a face in which astonishment and fear were plainly stamped.

“I’m afraid you won’t take the Dover boat just now,” said Stuart Rawdon, in that quiet voice that bespeaks at once purpose and victory.

“I—there must be a mistake—I don’t know you,” replied the other, with the same harshness of tone that had proclaimed him a Northern man two nights before in the Rue Vivienne, to which his present uncomfortable position added a note of passing anguish.

It is dangerous to stop a first-class traveller in

the midst of a bustling crowd, as many have learnt to their cost. Now, however, there was something in Rawdon's quiet determination that clearly expressed the knowledge of the danger he was running against as well as the consciousness that he held higher trumps in his own hand.

"There is no mistake at all, Mr.—Meyer,"—the name came out after some hesitation, that was full of unspoken meaning, and sufficient to impress upon the other's already wavering mind the ascendancy of a stronger will; for he had lost that unbounded assurance which almost always accompanies the greatest of human blunders. "I know all about your little game," Rawdon quietly continued, "my friend, Roger Delamare, has let me have the particulars—and, in short, I have been commissioned to bring you back to Paris, where you will kindly take me to M. Ambroise Dancart, whom you have managed to outwit the day before yesterday. It's no use trying to resist; I have the order for your arrest in my pocket, and I intend to make use of it if necessary. Will you come on quietly, Mr. Katzenstein?"

Some words produce the effect of a whiplash. The trapped foreigner suddenly looked up. "*Gott im Himmel!*" he exclaimed. "How do you know that name?"

"Never mind just now," answered Stuart Rawdon. "Will you come quietly, or do you want me to call for help?"

The Englishman obviously meant what he said, and it is dangerous to cross a man who is intent on his purpose, and victoriously carrying it out. The other seemed to follow his memory step by step, seeking the unknown clue which had enabled this stranger to find out his name and his track. How-

ever, to find a clue one must have some indication or other, and he had none. So he simply turned a half puzzled, half angered face at his captor, and meekly followed him into a reserved compartment of the *rapide* that was getting up steam to convey its load of pleasure-seekers to Paris.

CHAPTER III

“ L’amour est enfant de Bohême,
Et n’a jamais connu de loi.”

“ **M**ONSIEUR MEYER—Madame de Saragosse.”
Monsieur Meyer bowed with an old-time elaborateness; Madame de Saragosse inclined her fair head with a gleam in her deep blue eyes, that somehow seemed unusual in her otherwise placid countenance. Their hostess, Madame de Vermandois, who had accomplished the banal introduction, uttered a little sigh of relief, and went on to other duties.

Monsieur Meyer appeared to know practically no one amongst the brilliant society that thronged Madame de Vermandois’ salon in the Avenue du Bois. His tall and conspicuously blonde figure was clad in the best-fitting dress suit; from his well-groomed hair to the tips of his patent-leather boots, he seemed an eminently presentable specimen of manhood. Yet something—perhaps the upward curl of his waxed moustache, perhaps the slightly exaggerated erectness of his deportment—an erectness that was on the verge of haughtiness—stamped him, upon careful scrutiny, as a foreigner. This impression was confirmed when

he spoke ; his voice was that of a trained talker, and the choice of words and phrases proclaimed him to be a man of the world, with, perhaps, more than the average man of the world's share of that superficial knowledge and general learning that is often mistaken for education ; yet there was a lingering something in his accent, a hint of harshness that the man from the North never completely overcomes when he attempts to speak in a southern tongue—be he Russian, Pole or German. The lady to whom he had just been introduced with obvious pleasure, was also forsaken by the brilliant crowd that attended Madame de Vermandois' soirée. Black-haired and dark-eyed, with her regular features deeply marked on her handsome face, she certainly was striking enough to challenge attention. People whispered to one another that she was a princess in exile, or a gypsy—both of which might have been equally possible ; many of the youths present—youths who rowed, and rode, and roamed, and smoked gold-tipped cigarettes in gilt and white boudoirs—would have liked an introduction to the fair-skinned enchantress from the south ; but Madame de Saragosse was not officially known in the Parisian world of society loungers, so they turned upon her a last look of effeminate despair, and sought consolation elsewhere.

Their hostess herself, who, it was to be feared, was somewhat cynical, like the average hostess of our day, seemed mightily pleased with herself at having delivered her two solitary guests into each other's hands. She belonged to that sort of modern ladies who are never so happy as when they attend to other people's business ; did she want information upon any subject that tickled her feminine fancy, she had sure methods of ultimately getting at the root of the matter, for

she did ample justice to that ever-true saying of old —*cherchez la femme*.

That was probably the reason for the presence of Madame de Saragosse in her salon, for a woman never does anything without having good grounds for it.

Monsieur Meyer offered his arm to his fair partner, and she allowed him to lead her to a secluded corner, out of sight and hearing of the idle crowd that is all the more inquisitive about other people's secret motives, as it has none of its own. When they were seated in the convenient nook of a smaller room, he was the first to speak.

"I am thankful, indeed, to the Gods, for having been introduced to you at last!" His voice swelled as though in triumph.

She lifted her blue eyes to his for a single instant, and her lips parted as she laughingly answered: "At last? Is it so long since you first met me?"

"The first time I saw you," he said, with a world of meaning in his eager tones, "was about two months ago—two months ago, just opposite the Louvre; you were coming out of the little stone wicket that leads into the Place du Carrousel, and I was walking along the Rue de Rivoli——"

"I must compliment you upon your memory—it is excellent indeed." There was something very slightly ironical in her voice, and the play of her dark eye-lashes added a touch of mockery to her already somewhat feline features. Here was evidently no novice in the art of conversation, but a woman who knew the value of that priceless gem, repartee.

"Yes, my memory is good," he replied, like one trying to convince an incredulous listener. "I might tell you exactly the colour of the dress you wore, and the shape of your hat. But I will not bore you with

such trifles. I have something much more important to tell you, and that is the reason I came here to-night. A friend of mine told me you were to attend Madame de Vermandois' soirée, and I came here solely for this minute—this minute in which I may at last express to you my lifelong devotion—and my love."

The fateful word had been said at last. Madame de Saragosse, like every woman who has received the homage of a man's love, strove to conceal her joy under the sphinx-like smile of her blue eyes. For a woman is never so happy as when a man has declared that she is all to him—and never so enigmatical as when she answers his ardent profession.

"Indeed, Monsieur," she slowly said, without losing that slightly mocking tone to which her dark eyelashes added such a mysterious charm, "indeed, you say that you love me?"

"Yes, Madame, I say so, and I ask for nothing else but to prove it!"

Her sparkling eyes swept the far end of the room for an instant, and lit up with a gleam of triumph, such as appears in the glance of him who feels he will be victorious in the last, definite encounter.

"You wish to prove—your love—for me?" she slowly inquired. He hurriedly nodded his head in reply, and she continued, something harsh seeming to intrude upon her otherwise musical voice: "Prove it—by leaving France for ever, by promising never to return!"

"What you ask is impossible! I—I cannot leave Paris now! Absolutely I cannot."

"Well, then, Monsieur Katzenstein, I have friends who will compel you to leave."

There is always something disquieting, startling even, in an unexpected name suddenly thrown into

your face when you were the least awaiting it. Now the effect was increased tenfold by the sudden apparition of three newcomers. Dancart, Stuart Rawdon and another man, obviously French, quietly surrounded the sofa on which "Monsieur Meyer" was sitting, now deathly pale. The third of the party was the first to speak.

"Monsieur Katzenstein," he said in a perfectly even and passionless voice, "it is no use your pursuing this comedy. Three days ago, you managed to kidnap Monsieur Dancart, and to extract from him a document . . . of the highest importance. By a stroke of good luck, I happened to witness the little scene—which was lucky inasmuch as it enabled me to be the means of avoiding a European catastrophe. My friend, Mr. Rawdon, was thus able to leave London in time to stop your doing any mischief by bringing this document to England—at what we may term a—premature hour. Unfortunately for us, you were clever enough to escape from his hands upon your return to Paris. And it rested upon Mademoiselle Vera Gviasdovich"—he bowed elaborately to the lady who had been known as Madame de Saragosse—"to put you once more into our hands. Now I must ask you to hand back the document you were kind enough to—borrow from Monsieur Dancart, and to leave this country for ever."

There are moments when a man feels he has lost a game, however cleverly he may have played his hand. Only fools and men of genius pretend not to know this precise moment. Wherefore Monsieur Meyer, instead of straining at this gordian knot to prove its strength, as a woman would have done, calmly extracted a sealed packet from his breast pocket, and handed it to the speaker. Vera's eyes followed all his

movements with that feline grace which Slav women alone possess.

Monsieur Meyer rose.

“ I suppose,” he said, turning a parting gaze on her fair face, “ I suppose—we shall never—meet again.”

And he slowly walked out through the door.

JACK LONDON

THE RIVAL CALLS

“**Y**AH! Chook! Siwash!” The man’s voice rang out, sharp and splitting in the clear northern night, through which swept sheer waves of cold brilliancy and corruscating bars of greenish white that blotted out the stars. The dog, head low and unseeing, was whining softly as its muzzle shot through the tent flap, unheeding the angry words and the whiplashes that came raining upon it. At fifty below, it is unwholesome to wander too far out from the heat of the stove, and the man knew the wisdom of shoving the beast back into the cold.

Sharp Fang was certainly the finest sled dog from Dawson to Bering Sea ; as leader he had no equal, and in this case he was something more to the man than a mere sled drawer, a beast to which alone was the glory given of pulling off along the narrow tracks that were already glutted with the bones of straggling, goldseekers. He was something of a friend, since man, in the individual or in the aggregate, proves himself unfit to live alone, and is therefore driven by sheer necessity to take his pals where he can find them.

Here, in the frozen north, any distance away from Forty Mile, where the trail forks and crosses the river to Fort Cudahy, in this unregenerate hell of ice and snow, where the caribou shrills in the fall, and the wolf-packs growl in the fierceness of the arctic winter, there is nothing to hold a man's affections. The little voices may lure him on and on, the voice of the gold he thinks to win, the voice of the stars that deck the obfuscating blue, the voice of the Yukon ; but that greatest of all lures, that which is seen nowhere save in a woman's eyes, is denied him out there. So, some starving day of hard grub and harder gold, under the bitter sting of the Arctic frost, the long-delayed knowledge is vouchsafed him that he must take something to his heart. In the northland, such knowledge is equal to that of Jehovah in the matter of potency, and there begins something akin to friendship between primeval man and whining beast.

The man had covered endless miles of trail with no better companion than Sharp Fang. Up the Yukon he had gone, up into the north-east, past Koyokuk, Tanana and Minook, up along the trail of '98, crossing and recrossing the Circle, through the Flats, on to Eagle, covering all the country in the frantic rush for gold. He had tried for and lost the Eldorado and Bonanza claims, he had come into an occasional find immediately succeeded by a spree and a bust at Dawson ; but although he had more than once staked and lost his bottom ounce of dust, always had he managed to keep the dog by him. Now he was broke again, trailing far into the bitter North, whose voice shrilled more harshly than ever into his frozen ears. Everything had turned out wrong this trip, and not even the frizzling grub, the frying bacon and beans, could free his mind of the tormenting grip of winter. The

pressure of the outside cold forced the inner heat upward, and he breathed heavily as he swore at the cringing dog without.

The beast desisted at last, and the man huddled back to the stove, as near as possible to its grateful heat. And then suddenly there came a fierce growl, and strung along like a shrilling of hell winds were a succession of deep howls like those of a wolf-dog mourning at the moon. The tent-flap was again pulled up, and through the slit shot in a bristling mass of heaving fur.

The dog seemed to have lost all heed of its former self ; its long snout was thrust forward at the man's neck. It took its leap like any wild brute in the loneliness outside, and to the man was vouchsafed the knowledge that it must have gone stark, howling, mad. It missed its mark by a hair's breadth, and the sheer strength of its bound brought it clean on the pan where the beans were sizzling on the stove.

" By Gosh ! " let out the man, " it must be that streak of Siwash ! 'Course, he's got the wolf-blood in him." And to his smarting eyes there came the vision of howling packs of desert-wolves unhaltingly following a lonely sled-trail, and then, after the last dog had dropped and been thrust into the starving greedy throng, making short work of the stranded miner left alone to die in the God-forsaken wilderness. Many were the tales he had heard of the screeching brutes, and now he remembered that many of the best sled dogs are but little better than wolves, some of them having been born, bred, or suckled by a starved out she-wolf driven to the shelter of man.

Here was the wild come back with a vengeance, the streak of wolf-blood that called again, louder than any other voice, and drowning them all in its primitive glory of unregenerate power.

Sharp Fang uttered a deep, guttural howl of rage and pain, and, hardly recovering its balance, crouched together for another spring. Its grey eyes were nearly shot out of their sockets, and its clear white teeth shone fiercely through the half-lit gloom of the tent. An instant more, and the bound would have been taken, the cruel fangs would have been driven deep into the man's throat: but that moment never came. The man gave out a low groan: "Ai! Ya! Sharp Fang!" The brute responded with a slow whine, and relaxed its crouching attitude.

A second later there was vouchsafed to the man's bloodshot eyes the astounding scene of the wolfish brute completely calmed down, and squatting on its hind legs, with its forepaws beating the air as quietly as the best trained beast could do in a Dawson saloon, amid the smiling eyes of nondescript virgins and heavy jokes of breezy miners. Sharp Fang remained some minutes in this histrionic pose, still whining softly; then sprawled on to all fours, rubbed its bristling fur against the man's trembling hand, and quietly stalked back into the howling cold without.

"What the flaming——", began the man. "Hold on," he continued, his countenance relaxing, "of course his father was Jake Briggs' circus dog, an' 'e ain't no call to obey the streak of Siwash to the bitter end!"

G. BERNARD SHAW

THE EXPLOITERS

A decidedly unpleasant play.

A fine May morning in the consultingroom of a middleclass London doctor. It is a district rather remote from Harley Street ; and the practitioner is simply an ordinary one, with no hairbrained speciality that enables him to curtail his work and double his fees. The room is not very large, rents being high even in not fashionable parts. Looking eastward from within instead of westward from without, the street outside is seen through a couple of the usual nonetoolarge and curtainedarkened windows, between which you see an oilpainting dimly representing a most respectable gentleman in the costume of 1830. The wall in front of you has a door, leading into the waiting-room : naturally the best furnished one in the house. The other wall, which slants down westwards, also has a door, leading into Dr. Periton's private study. The fireplace is on this side of the room ; and the mantelpiece has the usual ornaments : a pair of antique-looking chandeliers, a marble clock and a perpetual calender. The furniture, which may have been acquired second-hand at Christies', comprises a desk

with a few medical implements and writing requisites ; a cupboard, now open, in which you may see a lot of flasks, a mortar and pestle, and various other instruments ; the doctor's chair, a couple of repcovered easy chairs for visitors, and half a dozen cane chairs strewn about the room.

The scene shows the middle-classedness of the whole neighbourhood.

A young lady is sitting in one of the easy chairs. She is dressed in the noncommittal tailormade costume of 1910, with a flavor of eccentricity in the green color of her veil, which is drawn up, revealing a pink complexion, grey eyes visibly absorbed in reverie, and a little pugnose, which in a lady's face can't be called otherwise than charming.

Dr. Periton is standing over her ; he is about 40 years of age, with the best bedside manners ; sharp-featured, but with a caressing voice that tries to get to the heart of his patients—and, as often as not, fails in the attempt. He has evidently failed just now.

PERITON : Well, dont you think so, my dear young lady ?

THE YOUNG LADY : No, I dont. I'm sure you arnt the doctor they thought of sending me to. Youve felt my pulse and seen my tongue, and now you say Ive got neuralgia. . . .

PERITON [*sweetly*] : Gastralgia—thats what I said.

THE YOUNG LADY : How CAN you know that ? You didnt even wait for me to tell you my symptoms.

PERITON : Why, my dear young lady, thats exactly what you wanted me to do, isnt it ? You see, I'm a doctor.

THE YOUNG LADY : Yes, but you neednt pretend to know whats the matter with me after two minutes

of conversation. The idea! One might think I were your daughter, by the things you said about me.

PERITON [*impressed by her words*]: I daresay I shouldnt know you so well if you WERE my daughter. By the way, how do you know youre NOT?

THE YOUNG LADY: Because your names Periton and mines Harper, thats all.

PERITON: Yes, I daresay. But then, what does that prove? Do you know your father at all?

THE YOUNG LADY: No, I dont. But what does that prove?

PERITON: Not much, I grant.

An uncomfortable silence ensues, after which he resumes:

May I ask, are you Miss Harper or Mrs.?

THE YOUNG LADY: Why, dont you know? Youre a doctor. . . . However, I dont mind telling you my full name is Miss Elisabeth Harper.

PERITON: Elisabeth? Indeed?

His brows go up, expressing great agitation. At the same moment the door of the waiting-room bursts open; and a man of forty or thereabouts walks into the room, without having knocked at the door, or otherwise bowed to the usual decorum of middleclass life. The newcomer, tall and clean-shaven, except for a moustache, wears an unconventional serge suit and a bowler hat, which he hastily removes on seeing the lady. He then dashes right up to the doctor.

PERITON: What! Hopkins? . . . You . . . I . . .

HOPKINS: Sorry to disturb you, I'm sure. But I cant help it. [*Turning to Elisabeth with his first demonstration of politeness since his entrance.*] Excuse me, Madam: my call is certainly more urgent than yours.

ELISABETH [*outraged*]: Oh, of course, you're a MAN.

HOPKINS [*regardless of the taunt, to Periton*]: Periton, you're a swindler!

PERITON: Excuse me, I'm engaged at the present moment. My patient. . . .

HOPKINS [*interrupting*]: I don't care a fig for your patient, I. . . .

ELISABETH: Of course. A full-sized monkey like you wouldn't eat figs. It feeds on acorns.

HOPKINS [*ignoring her*]: Periton, do you know you're a good, fat, healthy beast of a usurer, and a thick-headed, disgusting exploiter of the helpless into the bargain? Do you know you grind your fees out of the poor beggars' pockets before you've killed them, and snatch their bodies out of their graves when you HAVE? You're a disgrace to a civilised country, and I felt I could have no rest till I'd thrown your damned filth into your scoundrelly face! There!

PERITON: Kindly leave this room at once, sir! I wonder don't you know you're a human life sucker yourself. [*Turning to Elisabeth with his most professional air.*] I must apologise for this man's conduct, Miss Harper. If he doesn't leave my house instantly, I'll telephone for the police. . . . As I was saying when he came in, you're suffering from. . . .

ELISABETH: No, please don't insist. I thought I was at a doctor's; but now I know better. Oh, you hypocrite! [*she bursts out sobbing hysterically*].

PARLOUR-MAID [*opening the door of the waiting-room*]: Lady and gentleman to see you, sir: Mrs. Harper and the Rev. Joseph Knockjaw.

She ushers the visitors into the consulting-room. The lady is middle-aged and stoutish, with a pleasant

face and rather coarse features. She is attired in a fashionable silk dress that would be in its place in Ostend or Brussels, in the season, but glares horribly in the milder atmosphere of a London suburb. The gentleman is everything you can expect from his title.

PERITON : Really, I cant. . . .

MRS. HARPER [*running towards Elisabeth*] : Come, Betty, my dear. How anxious I felt about you ! Why couldnt you go to a decent doctor's ? I wonder are you aware I know nearly all the Harley Street specialists ? Instead of which you rush to the first charlatan you happen to come across. . . .

PERITON [*white with indignation and amazement*] : Madam, do you know who youre talking of ?

MRS. HARPER : Yes, I do. I wonder have you the cheek to trap a defenceless girl into your consulting-room ? I thought something horrible had happened to my poor Betty the moment I missed her ; but I'd never have imagined anything so horrid as THAT, if my old friend here [*pointing to the Rev. J. K.*] hadnt put me on your track.

THE REV. J. : Yes, Ive had my eye on Mr. Periton for some time ; and I know the way he derives his income.

PERITON : What do you mean, sir ?

THE REV. J. : I mean what I say. Youre one of those deceitful men who stick at nothing to attain their own evil and selfish ends. Under cover of your medical profession, youre nothing better than a vulgar—— ! No. I wont say the word in the presence of these ladies ; but you understand perfectly well what I mean !

ELISABETH : Oh ! How awful ! Mamma, I thought he was an honest man ! Why, he even told me he might be my father !

MRS. HARPER [*scandalized*]: Betty! You dont know what youre saying.

HOPKINS [*coming forward suddenly, and chucking Betty under the chin*]: No more you do, my dear.

MRS. HARPER: How dare you, sir?

HOPKINS: Why not? I'm not her father!

MRS. HARPER [*lapsing into her natural manner*]: Oh! To think of this happening to me! And in London too! Isnt this a civilised country, Id like to know? Oh, that men should be so cruel . . . ! [*to the Rev. J., who looks on rather absently*]: Joseph, why cant you defend me? Damn you!

THE REV. J.: Restrain yourself, Mary, restrain yourself. [*To Hopkins, who is staring open-mouthed at Mrs. Harper and is visibly attracted by her handsome features and coarse speech*]. Do you know what you have done, sir? This lady [*pointing to Mrs. Harper*] is a very old friend of mine; and youve no business to insult either her or her daughter.

HOPKINS: Look here, werent you at Oxbridge in '92?

THE REV. J. [*dumbfounded*]: Yes. What of that?

HOPKINS: Nothing. You dont happen to remember a young lady that was there at the time? Miss Violet Vavasour?

THE REV. J.: What do you mean, you blackguard?

HOPKINS: Youre as much of a blackguard as I am, anyway. I wonder do you know I'm Miss Vavasour's husband?

THE REV. J.: Her husband?

PERITON [*leaping up to him*]: Y O U !!! Her husband? Liar! I married Miss Vavasour—That [*pointing to*

Mrs. Harper] is Miss Vavasour. [*He suddenly turns to her in a rage*]. Yes: I call you to witness.

MRS. HARPER: What this man says is true. He is my husband. [*Turning to Periton*] Oh, George, why couldnt you hold your tongue? I recognized you at once. . . .

THE REV. J.: There must be a mistake somewhere. I'm sure. . . .

MRS. HARPER: Theres no mistake, Joseph; only my sister and I were twins, and SHE was called Violet . . . on the stage. Shes living at Vienna now, very rich, and quite respectable, and she married [*pointing to Hopkins*] HIM.

ELISABETH: So that man [*pointing to Periton*] is my father?

PERITON: Yes, my dear.

ELISABETH: Dont call me your dear! I wont have it! and I'm not your dear: I'm nobody's dear! I belong to myself only!

HOPKINS [*sneering*]: Yes: you can afford to belong to yourself, on the substantial income your mother and father provide you with. Most substantial it is, too, and come by in the most honorable way!

THE REV. J.: I'm sure this is the moment to turn over a new leaf: religion must come back upon all men.

PERITON: Oh! Stop your damned cant, you scoundrel! Dont you know youre every bit as bad as all the rest of us? I wonder dont you know YOUR income is derived from the mortgage you hold over the . . . property Hopkins has in several continental towns . . . Private hotels they are, and managed by . . . er . . . Mrs. Harper.

MRS. HARPER: Yes, and provided for by you.

ELISABETH: Oh! You filthy rascals! I'll never speak to any of you again! I'll go and marry my American prince instead!

She rushes hysterically out of the room; Mrs. Harper arms erect, strikes her favorite coarse-grained attitude; Periton and Hopkins seem ready to jump at each other's throats, whilst the Rev. J. glares at everybody.

JEROME K. JEROME

THE STAGE STUDENT

HE is a remarkable product of humanity—the Stage Student. Not that he is sometimes in a hole for want of money, and thinks of pawning his last umbrella—a valuable heirloom from his second cousin, who was grandson to the bosom-friend of a very celebrated old man, not because of that, bless his heart, no! Why, I myself have often felt like pawning my umbrella—have done it more than once, in fact; and I don't feel a bit more remarkable for it. But what always strikes me as peculiar to the stage student is that he never seems to get hold of anything at all in the way of cash—he is continually stonybroke—and yet he manages to jog along all right, and to pursue his brilliant career as a student. Besides, he always has something to pawn, as a last resource; indeed, the presence, at a period of desperate straits, of a valuable and hitherto overlooked pawnable object appears to be quite a distinctive feature of a student's life—in plays. Now, it is a simple thing, pawning, and I have often enough wanted to do so; but it is another instance of the fickleness of the jade Fortune, that, whenever *I* had most need to try it, I never *could* lay

hands on anything more valuable than a French postage-stamp for 25 centimes (used) or a broken teacup (generally my landlady's). And my friends were just as bad, all of them.

Speaking of friends, that is another characteristic trait of the stage student. He seems to have friends all about the world, and real bricks they must be, too. One of them has a sister, quite the loveliest girl you ever saw, and as simple and charming as a new-born babe; apparently she does not know what money is—may have heard of it, in a casual sort of way, but has certainly never seen or had any of her own. Her ideal of life is a penny ride on the Putney steamers, and a jam tart when she comes back; that is all she expects from the man she is going to marry—who is, of course, no other but the student himself. Why the marriage does not immediately take place, I really don't know, because, after all, the stage student might easily provide his bride with the above-mentioned luxuries at reasonable intervals, say once a month—bank-holidays extra. Of course, if they *did* marry at once, there would be no play, and then—— So *that* is doubtless the reason why they don't.

Besides the friend with the nice sister, the stage student has quantities of others. He must get them wholesale. One of them has a second cousin who is in the Civil Service, and another is a military attaché in Paris (or is it in Peru? A mere difference of name, of course). Now, although I myself had a good many acquaintances in my youthful days, I really don't remember having had any in that exalted line, and, what is more important still, none of *them* seemed to know any foreign ambassadors or military attachés. Of course, I am prepared to admit *they* and *I* were to blame for it, but it remains a fact for all that.

They are tricky creatures, friends. I used to have a good many of them, mostly fellows with healthy appetites and little cash—though nothing like, in numbers, those the stage student can boast of. One friend I had, I remember, *was* the possessor of a sister ; he used to talk of her pretty lengthily at times, but somehow he never seemed inclined to produce her. I conjured up to myself visions of a fair girl in a ravishing Liberty gown, nibbling sugar at the breakfast table, and ordering the domestic staff all about the house. One day, however, this notion exploded. Christina—that was her name—married a third-rate Chelsea clergyman, and I eventually saw her at a garden-party to which I managed to get myself invited. Of course, I ought—according to the laws of Stageland—to have fallen desperately and hopelessly in love with her ; but for the life of me, I couldn't. She was about six feet two (I am a small man myself), and certainly quite plain enough to be a suffragette. Another acquaintance of mine, rather smaller at the time, was the son and heir of a bosom-friend of one of my maiden aunts. He was all right, as far as boys go, but in a bachelor's rooms he was utterly impossible. My domestic staff then consisted of a buxom landlady, Mrs. Warbler, and my usual diet was haddock and bloater, all three of which appeared to disagree with Tommy's constitution.

But, as I was saying, the stage student is quite a remarkable fellow in his way. He does all sorts of things I never dreamt of doing, and, of course, there are lots of others he leaves undone. For instance, he doesn't seem to know the meaning of the word exam. What he is driving at the whole day long is a mystery to me to the present day, and I'm sure it must be to him also. Of course, I know scores of

young people who jog along without seeming to fully satisfy their soul's demands for medicine, law, or mathematics. Take mathematics, for instance; it's a simple thing, mathematics—all about cubes and square roots, and sines and tangents; well, I happen to know a good many fellows who stuff themselves more or less full of them. Mind, I don't mean to say they wouldn't prefer to go boating or flirting with a nice girl; but the fact remains that they don't spend the whole precious day going into raptures about their love, or singing songs of despair because they've lost their bottom shilling—while they take an extra-special gold-tipped cigarette out of a solid-gold chest and light it negligently with a match from a jewelled box. No, they are different, these friends of mine—why, so was I myself, now I come to think of it: we got a good deal of fun out of life, of course, but our days were haunted by that frightful nightmare—exams.

When I was very young and inexperienced, I used to think exams were tortures worse than any of those invented by the kind old Mother-Inquisition, specially organised for the survival of the unfittest. Nervousness, a shade of bashfulness, mayhap, and over and above all, the bleak and deathly frown of the jade Chance—all these, combining their forces against a hard-working and simple-minded youth, are quite sufficient to get him plucked in any examination he may care to enter for. That is what I thought in my halcyone days of youth—in those days when I myself was subject to the ordeal of exams. Now, however, I am grown older—and I don't know. I don't want to behave like the nurse, who sent the eldest girl to see what Tommy was doing, and tell him he mustn't. It's all very well to condemn exams.—it's easy to

condemn anything ; but what are you going to have in their place ? Choice ? The drawing of lots ? Cricket matches, or singular combats ? Any of these might meet the case, of course, but who could seriously contend they would prove better, in the long run ? No, my dear young man, I'm afraid you'll have to put up with exams for some time to come—and to compete against scores of pretty girls into the bargain : you'll have to face your nervousness, and your shyness, and the fickleness of fortune—yes, you'll have to face them all, as you do now—and you'll do well to remember that the best way of facing them is not to grind your teeth, and rattle out “ —— ” (or words to that effect) but to put your heart into your work, and to have a sufficient knowledge of what you're going to be asked. And you, my dear young lady, junior wrangler or Girton girl, you'll wipe those pretty eyes of yours and put away those blushes : they may help you to ensnare a youthful cousin, but they must be of no avail for the infinitely more serious business of passing your exam.

He is also a fine singer, that stage student of ours. His voice is a graceful tenor, of course, and when he chirps “ When other lips,” that alone is amply sufficient to turn all the pretty heads in the neighbourhood. Now, whenever I or any of my student friends tried to sing—a thing we did, not unfrequently, I remember, to the accompaniment of a rickety-rackety piano, and a mandoline always drepressingly flat in the E—we didn't turn any heads at all, except that of my domestic staff, who would come up in a most dignified manner, and exclaim, “ Lor, sir, I do declare ! Wot'll you young gentlemen be up to next, I wonder ? An' my 'usband as is down wi' 'numatics, too ! ”—which, as often as not, put a stop to our vocal exertions.

There was a fellow I knew at one time, a most disreputable wretch, I must acknowledge, who was possessed of a remarkable talent in the musical art ; he gave marvellous imitations of sick animals ; his impersonation of a calf with a cold in its head was enough to put a whole house into hysterics ; indeed, it often did, and I don't know how many landladies gave me instant notice after suffering his masterful performances. Yes, a most disreputable wretch he was, and sadly did he end : he is now, I believe, what is called an Illustration of the Bar, and has recently taken silk and added a *Sir* to his name ; I believe he still indulges his vocal talent from time to time, though he enjoys larger audiences now, and no member of any domestic staff, however exalted, dares object to his feats.

Another thing the stage student does with uncommon perfection is thought-reading. He is always miles away from sordid reality, mind, soaring ahead in regions of blissful penny steamers and cream tarts. A learned gentleman speaks to him of some abstract goodness-knows-what-I-mean sort of idea ; and a week later, the stage student remembers every word the old gentleman spoke. Not only does he remember every word, but it also turns out that he has understood every blessed one of them ; you see, while his mind seemed to be wandering in ethereal regions ever and ever so far away, it really was concentrated upon the learned gentleman's thoughts and character, which the youth read like a book. Myself, I am not a bit like that ; I am pretty often puzzled by what people mean when they speak, or even when they write ; of course, in books—learned books, mind—they have a graceful habit of telling you, in a footnote, that the meaning of such and such a passage is obscure ; it

is really very considerate of them, but (I say it in all modesty) I very often manage to gather this before I read the footnote at all. Well, the stage student does nothing of the kind. He is prepared to deny the very existence of any such thing as obscurity ; mind you, he may have heard his great-grandfather's second cousin hint at such a thing—but even if it did happen to be extant at that remote period, he is perfectly sure it must, at the present moment, have disappeared completely from the face of the earth ; to him, obscurity, in fact, must be a sort of pterodactyl or paleosaurus not even the fossil remains of which have ever crossed his path.

Oh, yes, he is a wonderful fellow, the stage student !

HENRY JAMES

THE OUTLOOK

LORD JAMES, pausing for a moment with the tips of his fingers on a high-backed chair, had before him the cosy walls of the breakfast room, with its red and green paper and lighter grey hangings, beautifully panelled in Elizabethan oak. In the middle of the room stood the table—all spotless white cloth, dainty china, sparkling cut glass, and shining silver—all the gentle morning delicacies of an English home. An ancient, a solid elegance pervaded the chamber, and extended into the view through the high window opening upon the sunny terrace without : sanded walk, balustraded steps, spraying fountains—all the smiling vastness of a sunny park, with its background of rippling trees and spotless sky. Every detail seemed to speak, for itself, of the highest quality tempered by taste and distinction.

Such was the outlook mellowed by the magician, Time ; but the frigid man who stood gazing on it evidently belonged to no such charming world of old English beauty, or was a living part of the delicate surroundings—indeed, he was, for the eye, a manifest counterpart to them all. Lord James was blatantly

modern, and certainly nothing gave a truer aspect of his real self than this morning atmosphere of a dainty breakfast-room, accentuating the negative relations between it and the keener instincts apparent, to the student of thoughts, in his trenchant features.

Young he was no longer, but years, in such as he, only serve to impress more thoroughly upon the body the aspirations of the temperament. Clearly, he was a man with full confidence in himself, and used to having his own way in a world he had conquered by sheer force of will and cleverness. He might have ruled by the power of birth, as so many are satisfied to do, and remain content with a brilliant and graceful stupidity ; he might even have confessed, in a moment of abandon, that he had often been within an ace of exchanging his cleverness for a touch of old-time stateliness—although he was not lacking in distinction, and nothing would have induced one to mistake him for an adept of millionairish vulgarity. Doubtless, he had had to struggle ; and certainly, his rather stumpy fingers, poised on a chair back, proclaimed him to belong to the world that acts and thinks, rather than to the mundane strata that merely reaps what time has sowed for its especial benefit.

Slowly the chair began to glide along the carpeted floor, its movement being a rectilinear translation in a direction perpendicular to the snowy edge of the breakfast table ; under the skilful guidance of Lord James' chubby hand, the muscles of which might have been seen to bulge in a well-harmonised contraction, the motion began, very slowly at first, becoming gently accelerated little by little. At the same time, the light in Lord James' eye, kinder and bolder at once, shone upon the high back as it was used to shine upon some fellow-financier he had just had the

better of in a most polite discussion that might have left him the richer by several thousands of pounds—thus clearly exhibiting the fundamental relations between the commanding intellect and the accomplished instrument. His lips were half open, as if preparing to address some one with a significant manner that he might have had, and his right arm began to fold itself at the elbow, as though taking in a graceful curve it was its obvious intention of assuming. Indeed, his whole body seemed, for an instant, to execute the charming premises of a very slight rotation round a horizontal axis, remaining poised in an attitude of discriminating expectance, while his left boot, slightly pressed against the chair's foot-bar, accompanied the slow movement of that high-backed article of furniture.

Gently, very gently, the translation became more accentuated, and suddenly changed into a twenty degree rotation round a vertical axis, the foremost left angle of the seat being now apparent from beneath the white place of the snowy table-cloth. With a sharpness that might well have been expected from a man of his physique, Lord James seemed to grasp the exact moment for steady and rapid action: his fingers suddenly left the high back whereupon they had been so gracefully resting; his whole body, with a litheness that was evidently the fruit of a lifelong practice, seemed to prepare for a gentle leap that took place before one had time to notice it . . . The chair, now propelled forwards by the same muscular activity, though from different regions, slowly settled down once more in rigid immobility before the table, as though eminently glad, in the innermost recess of its antiquity, that Lord James was now sitting down to breakfast.

HENRY NEWBOLT

ADMIRAL LIFE

COME! What are ye thinking of, sighing, lads?
Moping o'er child or wife?

Not one of ye speak of dying, lads:

We're serving Admiral Life!

He knocks us about from wave to wave,
He calls our fathers from out their grave,
He dubs the strong and he makes the brave—
Come, here's to Admiral Life!

In days that were peaceful, ay, and kind,
From Cromwell up to Fife,
He set us astir, and lay to wind,
Did good Admiral Life!
He gave us our looms, our trade, our ore,
He taught us the tricks o' the old seashore,
He blew in our hearts the breath of yore—
He made us, did Admiral Life!

And now, if the clouds should burst again,
In a galloping, seething strife,
He's ready to quench our thirst again,
Is true old Admiral Life!

He'll hoist our flag and he'll swell our hearts,
He'll coach us again for a thousand parts,
He'll send us around when the new fun starts,
Will fine old Admiral Life !

Come ! Now is the time to bump your glass :
For him it is always rife ;
So fill it right up, and dump your lass,
And drink to Admiral Life !
For he's a man to our own accord,
He's the only master our souls afford,
He's the only king and the only Lord—
Yea, here's to Admiral Life !

R. W. SERVICE

BUCK UP !

WHEN you don't know what to do, when you've
got a fit of blues,
And the world, somehow or other, goes
all wrong,

Don't forget the winning game is the one where first
you lose,

If you've only got the pluck to play along !
There's no earthly bit of use in the bending of your
head,

In the moaning and the groaning and the whine ;
Buck up, laddie, try again—you'll have better luck
instead—

For the very worst of all is to repine !

Yes, buck up, my boy, buck up for all you're worth ;
You be sure your time will come ; it's up to you ;
But whate'er you may have done,
Mind, it's only just begun,
Till the ultimate success is clear and true !

When the field is deep in mud, and you've just received
a kick,

And the goal's a far-off spot you hardly see,
Rub it in for all you're worth, serve it hot, and serve
it thick :

You're the man to score a point and join the spree ;
There's the half-back charging on—run, you fool,
run, though you fall—

Now's the time to have a go—let fly, let fly :
There you are ! Buck up, my lad, it's your boot has
kicked the ball,

And the keeper at the goal has passed it by !

Yes, buck up, my lad, buck up for all you're worth ;
You be sure your time will come ; it's up to you ;

But, whatever may have been,
Play the ready game, the keen,
Till the ultimate success is clear and true !

When the office doesn't pay, when you're hardly flush
in cash,

And the trades and competition seem unfair,
That's the time for cool endeavour, *that's* the time for
grit and dash—

Not at all the time to cry and tear your hair.
Set your hand to decent work (there is always some
to do,

And you'll always find the time to do it in),
You shall not go under yet, if you're ready not to rue,
And you're bound to strike your mine and find
your tin.

Yes, buck up, old pard, buck up for all you're worth ;
You be sure your time will come ; it's up to you ;

But whatever may occur,
Be a *man*, and not a cur,
Till the ultimate success is clear and true !

When the final voyage comes, when you're lying sick
in bed,

When the doctors say there's nothing left to hope,
When the moments dwindle fast, when the last, last
word is said,

Turn a smiling face to God—forget to mope.

What's the good of bitter thoughts, when you're
leaving earth for good—

What's the good of crying now? Come, drop
those sighs!

No! You just stand up once more, just as when, in
life you stood—

Meet your Maker like a man, with open eyes!

Yes, buck up, old man, buck up for all you're worth!

You be sure your time will come; it's up to you;

But, right till your final breath,

Look ahead, and straight at death,

Till the ultimate success is clear and true!

JOHN GALSWORTHY

PUNISHMENT

A play in one Act

(The scene is the shop of Messrs. Will Wisp and Son, on an April morning. The shop is a modern drapery establishment, furnished with an oak counter with the usual shelves at the back, and some chairs for the customers. A wooden carving of a spaniel is the only artistic ornament of the premises, which are strictly utilitarian in their decoration. A panelled door at the back leads to the manager's office, and another, on the left, to a room marked "private.")

The managing shop-walker, Coalfather, is busy behind a desk, while an assistant, Timmers, is attending to Marjorie Beesworth, a prospective customer.)

Coalfather (sotto voce): Two - and - twopence - half - penny and one-and-three-farthings—oh, damn these sums ! . . .

Timmers: Red crape, you said, Madam ?

Marjorie: Yes, I want two yards.

Timmers: I really don't know whether we have anything in that line . . . Excuse me a moment : I'll just go and ask the manager.

(He goes to Coalfather's desk.)

Marjorie (who takes a look of intense worry) : What shall I do if they haven't got any? I daren't take it black, because I don't want him to think I'm in mourning; and yet, he *must* know there's some change.

Timmers (coming back to her) : Er . . . The fact is, we have just run out of red crape, madam; but we are expecting a new delivery, and if you could wait a day or two. . . . or we could send it round . . .

(Cuivrand enters from the street. He is a shabby-looking individual, with something foreign about him.)

Coalfather (speaking to an assistant behind the scenes) : Wilson, just come along here a minute; you're wanted.

Cuivrand (eagerly, to Marjorie—He speaks with a foreign lisp) : Ha! you see there, Madame! I thought you had entered into the shop, and I did not mistake myself.

Marjorie : Why did you follow me?

(Wilson, the junior assistant, has come in, and walks up to Cuivrand, behind the counter.)

Wilson : Good day, sir. What can we do for you this morning?

Cuivrand : Oh . . . I . . . er . . . *Je n'ai besoin de rien.* I came in for Madame.

Wilson : Ah? Yes . . . indeed, indeed . . . Fine day, to-day, sir . . .

Cuivrand : Veree fine, my friend, veree fine . . . *(to Marjorie)* And what had you need of, madam?

 A new costume?

Marjorie : No . . . er . . . I wanted some stuff; but they have not got any.

Cuivrand : Not got any? These *Anglais* know not the *galanterie* . . . *(to Timmers)* You say you have no stuff, no stuff for Madame?

Timmers : I'm sorry to say we haven't—not just now, sir. As a matter of fact, we've just run out of our stock in red crape, sir . . . But if . . .

Cuivrand : You pigs! You cannot even sell what Madame asks? It is disgusting!

Timmers : 'Ere, I say, sir, I can't stand that!

(*He goes to confer with Coalfather.*)

Marjorie (to Cuivrand) : Oh! Don't . . . please don't! . . . Can't you see they are doing their best, but . . .

Cuivrand : They are camels! They should immediately excuse themselves. But what can one expect of these *cochons d'Anglais*?

Coalfather (who has come forward from behind his desk, and has been staring speechless at Cuivrand during this outburst) : Look 'ere, you ought to be ashamed o' yourself, coming inside a respectable drapery emporium, and kicking up a silly row like that!

Cuivrand ; 'E calls it "kicking up a silly row!" You can't understand the feelings of *un homme du monde*!

Coalfather : Stop your jaw, you untidy foreigner!

Cuivrand : Yes, I am a foreigner, it is true. And when I see 'ow the *Anglais* treat a woman, I am glad not to be one of you! You understand nothing! You are only a stupid merchant, a pig without intelligence, an artless camel!

Coalfather : That'll do! Here, out you go! . . . Timmers, you chuck him out.

Marjorie : Oh, my God!

Cuivrand : No, they shall not chuck me out, those brutes! I will remain 'ere . . . *J'y suis, j'y reste*. I don't abandon a woman: I 'ave never 'urt a woman, and I . . .

Coalfather : Chuck it, I say ! Who said anything about hurting a woman ? Get out of this, you fathead !

Cuivrand : No ! You shall not expulse me : I defend it ! I am not verree strong, but I know to fight. I !

(Marjorie turns a pleading face towards him, but he mistakes her expression for one of tenderness, takes her in his arms and kisses her.)

Coalfather : Well, I never !

(At the same instant Tom Wisp, the junior partner, comes out of the door marked "private," and is taken aback at the unusual scene.)

Tom : What on earth's the matter, Coalfather, what does all this mean ?

Coalfather : I really don't know, sir. It's this 'ere foreigner who's making a ass of himself, and——

Tom : Now, look here, sir, we really can't allow this . . . er . . . this to occur in our establishment. It's not decent. Anyone might come in this very minute.

Cuivrand : Ha ! You are the *patron* ? Well, allow me to tell you that your shop is a box, yes—*une sale boîte* !

Tom : Really, sir, if you have nothing else to say, I must request you to leave the premises.

Cuivrand : I leave when I like. But you think you can insult a 'armless woman without defence ? You are not a gentleman, Monsieur !

Tom : Who's been insulting anybody ? I say——

(Will Wisp, senior, attracted by the commotion, comes out of the door marked "Private.")

Wisp : What's all this, hey ?

Coalfather : There was a party came in here to order some red crape, sir, and we said we'd oblige as

soon as possible. And then this silly foreigner comes in and kicks up no end of a row . . .

Cuivrand : Yes, Monsieur, I defend 'armless women, and I show you the true spirit of chivalry.

Wisp : Chivalry be blowed ! I want to know what you came in here for !

Cuivrand : I came for Madame. I love 'er ! I love 'er verree much !

(He takes her in his arms again, and kisses her.)

Tom : It's too bad ! And the second time, too !

Wisp : We can't allow that in here . . . Wilson, just go and call in the constable of the beat.

Wilson : Yes, sir. *(He goes out into the street.)*

Marjorie : Oh, dear ! What shall I do ?

Cuivrand : Fear not, Madame. They shall do you no 'arm. I am 'ere to defend you. I see now the truth of this nation, and shall not lack the courage to tell them what I think of them. *(to Wisp)* : Yes, Monsieur, you are a nation that comprehends not the beauty of the life ; the life it was not made to refuse stuff to a 'armless woman ; the life it was made to serve 'er ! But you are only pigs, you Insulars !

(Just at this moment, Wilson returns, bringing in a police-constable behind him : he has heard Cuivrand's last words.)

Policeman : 'Ere, you furriner ! You can't insult us like that ! It's my duty to take you in charge.

Cuivrand : What ? Arrest me—me, an innocent and chivalrous man ? You coward !

Policeman : Stop your jaw, I say ! You're my prisoner. And anything you say will be used as evidence against you.

Cuivrand : Me ! Arrest me ? No, never !

(Before anybody can stop him, he flies wildly into the counter ; the wooden spaniel falls heavily on top of him, and he falls down, motionless.)

Wisp : Well. I say !

Policeman : He's done it this time, an' no mistake.

Tom : What ! Dead ?

Policeman : Dead as a doormat, yes, sir.

Coalfather : Dear, dear !

Marjorie : That's what comes of wanting to arrest and to punish a chivalrous man ! Oh, my God, what shall I do ?

Coalfather : Dear, dear !

(Marjorie stands petrified and looks wildly at him.)

The curtain falls.

HALL CAINE

THE SINNER

I

SUSAN O'MURPHY, who lived with her aged father in a tiny cottage at the far end of Ballywhack, was by common judgment a gawk—a bright-eyed, broad-tongued, comely-looking gawk. Nobody in the little village had ever been known to utter any precise accusation against her—no, not even Pink Sam, landlord of the “Manx Pranks,” who held that sin need not be seen to be proven, on the strength of the text that says: “Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see.” Yet old Red Bill, her father, did no work of any kind, and had even ceased to be noted as the most shameless poacher in the village.

Susan's was a queer cottage. Her mother, now dead, had been famed as a beauty in her day, and Susan, as a child, had her black hair and face as brown as a hot-cross bun. At school, the other children had laughed at her, and called her “darkie,” and many had been the battles fought on her account by some of her youthful admirers, especially Pompey Geenkrey, whom report named as the bastard son of

the Deemster's brother. She had been used to run about among the gorse and damp scraa soil, with hardly any boots or stockings; but the sun, instead of burning her a darker brown, had made her into a strapping girl, easy-going and good-tempered, to whom Pink Sam was wont to apply the text: "But they made light of it and went their ways." Like the other Ballywhack children, she had been to school, off and on, for a length of time calculated to give her fairly rough notions of spelling, sufficient, at all events, to enable her to read the paper to her father of an evening. Indeed, she grew to be what the simple Manx folk regarded as a "scholard," though where the title came from no one exactly could say. She was, however, dainty enough in her pink sun-bonnet, red stockings and green shoes, and Pompey was a frequent visitor to the tumble-down cottage, where he met with many a sound rebuff from old Red Bill, her father.

"Look here," he would say to the young fisherman, "I don't want none of your fooling round my Susan, by Gough! 'S long as I'm here, I'll have none o' the likes of you!"

"You're reg'lar rough on me, Mr. O'Murphy," he replied. "What I says is why shouldn't I be a good husband to your girl, and a good son to yoursel'?"

"Husband, indeed!" grunted the old man. "A clane youngster like you, without even a pound to call his own! And what d'you expect to live on, I'd like to know? It's clane mad you are, and those ones as are more wiser than you'll ever be have their duty to do: so off you go!"

After which direct speech the disconsolate wooer retreated to the "Manx Pranks," where Pink Sam

delivered a warning lecture on the text: "But the people are many . . ."

"Master Geenkrey, 'tis labouring in vain you are! why not leave the lass alone, an' her being what she is, too?"

"See you here, Pink Sam," retorted the young man, "I'll have none o' your calling her no names! She's a dacent girl, seeing as I'm willing to take her as my wife, by Gough! It's only her father who's a . . ."

"Steady, boy veen, steady!" answered the publican. "The Lord has said: 'Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out.' You needn't waste no words on *him*—it's *her* as wants looking after."

"What d'ye mane?" enquired the young fisherman.

"I mane just what I say, Master Pompey. I seen Susan in church ever so many Sundays running, an' if ever she was a trollop before—which I wouldn't swear to, mind—I'm middlin' sure she's nothing o' the kind now. She's minding the texes, my boy, the texes that say: 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord'—ay, and the woman, too, you may be sartin!"

"Ye don't say so!" ejaculated Pompey. "I've been having my eye on t'young parzon, an' I do suppose as *he's* the reason for why Red Bill'll have none of me!"

"I shouldn't wonder if you was not far wrong, boy veen," said Pink Sam. "Well, it'ud be a very good thing for the girl, 'specially if she loves him."

"Love? And do you think he'd be fool enough to marry a lass like Susan? I daresay she could make 'im a dacent cup o' tay—but she couldn't even understand one of his sermons, to say nothing of

helping him make them, as old Mrs. Puttey used to do for the Rector ! ”

“ I wouldn’t be so sure of that, Master Geenkrey,” replied the publican. “ Susan’s a good middlin’ scholard, an’ many’s the time as I’ve seen ’er with a fat book in ’er hand—a book as I understand nothin’ about, mind you, and full o’ Latin and French texes . . . I knows all about ’er book, ’cause I happened to look at it once, when she’d left it on a bench outside ; an’ she’s been studyin’ ’ard as ’ard can be. Oh, yes, I can tell you, an’ no mistake . . . ‘ He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ ”

Pompey felt a little click of frightened sorrow in his heart of hearts, like a cuckoo hatched in a sparrow’s nest. He felt the girl he loved was escaping him now towards another. Ah ! The tearful, bitter thought ! . . . She was making herself worthy of another, higher placed than he, and he was to lose her after all ! . . . What a dreadful thing it was to be a man ! What a tragic thing ! What a horrible and vile thing ! To be played with and fooled by the first hussy that comes along ! That was man’s lot. Interest ! Cant ! Ambition ! Those were the motives that made woman act ! To be nothing, to be conquered, to be trampled upon !

Pompey fled to his little bare attic that night, and cried for the shame of it. Poor Pompey ! Poor Pompey ! Poor Pompey !

II

Susan was in her little bedroom on a glorious summer day, and it was not more than three o’clock. Eustace Smallpox, the young parson, had promised to come and fetch her at four, and they were to be

married in a week. He had often doubted the wisdom of this course, but he loved her dearly, and since he had heard her pronounce the words *Dominus Vobiscum*, he knew Susan was worthy of him, in spite of her lowly birth and indifferent upbringing; he had experienced his moment of triumph—but little did he know the battle that was raging in the girl's heart.

She flung herself down upon her little bed, and her eyes filled with tears. What mattered it to her that the village gossip had always been against her—to her who had never been base in her own heart? Yesterday only, for the first time in her life, she had realised the depth of her passion, when Eustace had spoken to her at last, and she had yielded to his earnest entreaties.

“Oh Gough!” she exclaimed in a fervid prayer, “what have I done! Oh, save me, Lord!”

She was conscious of her frailty, as a woman always is when she falls from honour; yet she knew she was not the victim of a hurried impulse, but the slave of an everlasting and pathetic ideal—the tender, merciful, deep-rooted belief that blood is thicker than water. And she had given herself whole-heartedly and freely, as a true woman does—and she prayed for forgiveness.

Then she dried her eyes, and chose a pretty frock for her lover's visit. This she took from a home-made niche contrived out of a shelf in front of which a curtain was hung on a piece of string. It was a simple green print skirt, with a bodice of the same material, like waves on a purple sea. She took a pink bonnet to match, and white shoes and stockings that brought out the burly elegance of her ankles and the ample smallness of her feet. All these articles she laid upon her bed, looked at them intently with a wistful,

fascinated smile ; then she took up each of them in turn, poised them in front of her smiling eyes, and put them on, to emerge as a bonny Manx lass, aglow with tender years and bounding blood.

Eustace met her outside the little cottage.

“ Susan ! ” he softly cried ; and the next instant she was in his arms.

“ I love you, dear ! ” she exclaimed, nestling her beautiful face against his clerical waistcoat.

Something, however, in his fervid gaze, arrested her attention, and her smile lost its freshness.

“ What is the matter, Eustace ? Something is troubling you ! . . . Tell me ! ”

“ Nothing, my darling—nothing important . . . Only that I must leave you for a short time . . . ”

“ Leave me, Eustace, leave me ? Surely you do not mean it ! *Domine, ora pro nobis !* It cannot be true ! ”

“ Alas, too true, my dear one, too true ! But don’t think I shall ever forget you ! I shall always remember your sweet love, always ! And in my old days it will be something beautiful to look back upon. . . . ”

“ I don’t want you to look back upon it ! I want you to look upon it *now*, and to look at *me* ! I love you, Eustace ! I love you, and you are mine ! Nothing can divide us now ! ”

“ Don’t say that, Susan ! The sea is wide and the world is large, the voice of love is sweet, but Duty is stern ! ”

“ Duty ? What is Duty ? Your duty is here, Eustace, ever at my side ! ”

“ Susan, don’t look at me like that ! Don’t ! I cannot bear it ! ”

“ I will ! I am yours, dear, and you are mine ! Kiss me ! Say you won’t go ! ”

She clung to him desperately, and tears were in both their eyes.

"I love you too, dear," he moaned, "but—oh, how pitiless is the call of duty!"

"But why must you leave me—now? Why?"

"Dearest, you cannot understand . . . I owe a friend half-a-crown, and I know something terrible will happen if he does not get the money within three days . . . I dare not send it by post: it might get lost. No! I *must* go to London myself . . . I leave for Douglas to-night . . . And I shall not forget you, my dear. The memory of our love will ever bind me to you!"

"I want you to remain! I want you! Eustace, don't go to London!"

"I must, dear, I must . . . Be brave—I shall soon be back!"

"No! Don't leave me! I love you! Oh, how I love you!"

She was fighting for her life, and she knew it. But he slowly disengaged himself from her embrace.

"My dear, I must . . . Dire is the necessity! God Himself would never pardon me if I left my friend in the lurch. He knows it is hard enough for me as it is: you must be brave!"

She sank on her knees upon the gorse, sobbing silently, while he slowly disappeared behind the cottage . . . Would God have no pity on her after all?

III

Several weeks passed, and the parson did not come back. The loneliness was killing her. As time wore on, she saw more and more of Pompey, and his rough

words of consolation made the red riot of her righteousness run rabid in her heart. And the climax was reached when she became conscious that she was about to become a mother. And a terrible fear began to possess her: would the child that was born to her be a boy, like his father, or a girl, like herself?

The fact that she was unmarried mattered little to her at first, but the horror of the situation began to dawn upon her after a few days. And she was the more sorry when Pompey, plucking courage, deliberately asked her, one evening, to be his wife.

"You see, Susan," he said in his rough Manx way, "I only mane good to you. I know as I don't know much, and can't even say my everin' prayers in Latin, same as you. And I've not got much money, neither. But Pink Sam says as the rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not . . . So, you see, I can open mine, and see you—and that'll be quite enough for a simple fellow like me."

"Don't, Pompey, don't! You cannot understand!" In her secret heart she was fighting against the temptation to let this man give her his name and her child a father. But what a terrible sin she would be committing! Would God ever pardon such a trespass?

Pompey Geenkrey, however, had a heart of gold under his coarse fisherman's clothes; and though he could not imagine the torture she was suffering, he guessed the pain she must be feeling.

"Don't cry, Susan, don't cry," he exclaimed. "'Tis the young parzon ye're wanting, I know—'tis not mesel', you can't decave me . . . Well, I'll fetch him back for you, never you fear—I'll fetch him back!"

The generosity of the Manxman left her aghast ; his words were wondrous solemn and terribly unexpected, but they brought an immense relief to her overburdened heart.

" Oh, Pompey ! " she muttered, amid her tears. And the young man rushed to his fishing-smack and set out on his chivalrous errand.

That night Susan flung herself upon her little bed with something like relief in her heavy heart. Ah, to-night ! But what would to-morrow bring ? How could she live with such thoughts swelling in her breast ? How could she sleep ? How could she remain awake ? Susan ! Eustace ! Pompey ! To-morrow ! Oh, God ! Oh, God !

IV

Three days later, Pompey once more stood in front of the little cottage, his arms linked with that of the young parson, who looked mighty pale and wondrous shattered. Their steps did not make much noise on the gravel, but Susan came running out of the honeysuckle-covered door to meet them. She uttered a little wild click of frightened joy, and rushed towards Eustace.

" At last ! " she gasped.

" Yes, I have come back to you, my darling," he made answer. " But I am not the righteous man I was. . . . I . . . "

" Never mind, Eustace," said Susan. " Nothing at all matters, except that I love you ! "

" No, dear, nothing matters—but my soul—and that belongs to God ! He will help me in this sweet hour, for He knows I am not yet bad to the core ! ' Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold ' : I have

a public confession to make, and while Pompey is here . . .”

“Why, he is gone!” exclaimed Susan, looking round. “The dear kind, fellow has left us alone.”

“Well, my confession shall be none the less public, darling: the birds, and the flowers, and the stones, and the very earth, shall know my sin! . . . When I left you I thought . . .”

And he would have unburdened his heavy soul for all the wide world to hear. This was the hour of his redemption, his sin confessed in all but deed, when his conscience was clean before him, when the world was ready for his acknowledgment, with the hand of the fallen woman that loved him in his. He stood there ready to face any odds that might befall him.

And she? She shut his mouth with a fiery kiss, and he knew, as the sun blinked through the jewels of his tears, that the whole future was before them both, to atone and to love.

MARIE CORELLI

THE DOUBLE SOUL

NOISE—shrieks and rumours, and endless bustle ! Noise—and the ever-moving crowd went ever on and on, amid the throb of the fair ! The place was full of people and booths—people arrayed in their Sunday-best, booths ostentatiously decorated with scarlet and gilt lettering—booths sending forth their torrents of raging harmony, while the thud of a distant merry-go-round, under the lustrous blue of the skies, spreading upwards—heavenwards—was like the heart-beating of the fair's immense and dazzling soul. Here was Life—Life struggling forth in sound, in colour, and in movement—Life bursting out of the ever-brilliant shell of Time, little heeding Death, that chaos of ultimate darkness—Life, a seething, raging orgy of unadulterated beauty and waning youth, with never a thought for good or evil ! The perpetual buzz of sham activity was as though the trump of Resurrection had sounded, and all this feverish noise—this strange bustle—was the Flaming sword upon the volcano of seething passions, the pit of lurking endeavour, which Man calls his Soul !

The crowd was less dense (1), perhaps, in front of a poorly illuminated stall—a shabby, faded booth that lacked the brilliant lustre and those sort of qualities that attract instant attention—immediate notice—from those who might otherwise pass away into oblivion. The letters that had once been gilt still spelt, through the dwindling sands of Time and Space, the words of old: “Tempus Fugit”; that was all; no vain and boasting assertion of unrevealed treasures—of marvellous, hidden things—of surreptitious wonders—that were to be disclosed within for a beggar’s fee . . . And the crowd, like a blind, soulless creature, like those sort of evanescent four-wheelers that simply follow their unintelligent and wholly unreligious leader—the crowd barely lingered for an instant, uninterested, unattracted—and went on to more opulent and soul-distressing shows.

A girl was sitting in front of the poor little booth—a girl who, at the first glance, had belonged to those sort of people who are termed “well-to-do” before they come down in life—people who cultivate their pocket before they think of their soul—and for whom a thousand-pound monument in the cemetery after an earth-burial according to the rites (2) of their own particular religion, be it Lutheran or Catholic, is the acme of respectability. This girl, my heroine, whose name was written up above her on the faded velvet lintel, looked haggard and worn among the flare of the myriad lamps—the flare that seemed to grow less and less as the shadow of her preoccupation deepened more and more; she smiled faintly, and

(1) The word is taken in its etymological, rather than its colloquial, sense, though the latter would be quite correct.—(Note by Augustus Meddlesome, M.A.)

(2) The authoress no doubt meant “the wrongs.”—(Note by Augustus Meddlesome, M.A.)

looking straight at the dwindling crowd, the whole fair was impregnated with her latent sorrow.

One man, however, did not turn away—a man of large stature, with shaggy hair and a lean, florid face—a man of thought rather than action. He stepped out from the mass of mere pleasure-seekers, and came up to the faded booth.

“Do you tell fortunes?” he said; and forthwith walked up the rickety steps.

She was silent for an instant, and her eyes lit up with an imperial smile—imperial, because past the sway of usual human atmosphere; then she languidly answered:

“To those who believe—those who have the Faith.”

“It must be hard work,” he replied, “come, tell me what I may expect.”

He held out his hand for her inspection—the beautiful, true, untamed gaze of a steadfast eye; and her answer came slowly—a deep answer fresh from the soul.

“You are learned in the ways of men. What can I tell you that you do not know already? I would not dare to reveal your past—and your future is as clear as crystal.”

“Come, Miss Fugit,” he said in a soft, musical voice, “I see you judge me right. But if *you* will not tell me what is before me, shall not *I* forecast what is in store for *you*?”

His cold, flaming eyes were now full upon hers, and she seemed to resent his gaze—a gaze that seemed charged with a weird charm—a gaze that hovered on the pinions of immortality. Soon, however, she yielded to his fervid depth of mastery, and he slowly proceeded.

“ My name is Eugene Dratoff, and I have conquered Matter ! Soon, very soon, there shall arise through the miracle of Science a better, a higher Manhood and Womanhood upon this earth ! As we see it now, thousands are unhappy, millions are miserable. They seek—what ? Success ! And what is success ? False hypocrisy ! Stupid lie ! . . . There is but one Success—different to all petty grievances and foul triumphs—the Success that gives us the knowledge of the Us we dream of as rising in the shape of a soul from our dead body ! ”

Now she knew ! She was all a-tremble as he continued, his eyes flashing in the darkness that had now grown around them.

“ Yes ! Even you, who were an acrobat in former days, Miss Fugit, shall pass to a better state through the higher workings of Science. Come ! Look at this ! ”

He took a long tube from the inner pocket of his coat, and placed the shining metal before her careworn eyes. Suddenly he pressed a hidden spring—and the whir of machinery fell upon her pearl-like ears, while she listened to his inspired lecture.

“ Life is Movement ; Movement is Life. Whatever moves cannot be dead : that is the great principle of the world—of this—and of the Other. Wherever some reigning Spirit—some Divine Being—causes motion to animate the stark and dreary form of Matter, there begins Life—there *is* Life. Stillness is Death ; Death is the end of Movement. But not the ultimate end ! The ultimate end of Movement is more Movement—Movement on a higher, grander level than before—Movement such as we poor mortals could not even conceive, if the keen eye of Science had not been given to aid our powerless microscopes

. . . Here, in this tube, is Motion—do you hear it? Each revolution of the mechanism ordained by Science brings the seer nearer to that ultimate Movement which is the true Life; it looses the Soul from the vulgar grip of the gruesome Body! it purifies the Spirit from the revolting supremacy of Matter! Look! What do you see?”

His thrust the end of the tube towards Tempus' fugitive eye, and she sprang up with an involuntary exclamation.

“How glorious!” she cried; “why, it seems full of Light and Heat!”

“It is full of Light and Heat,” he replied. “Light and Heat are but forms of Movement—and I have condensed them into my tube in such a manner as you see. To look at them as you are doing now is to move—it is to live! . . . And *you* know Heat,” he went on.

“Yes,” said Tempus, “I used to be a fire-eater when I was very small—one of those sort of conjurers who swallow flames at Hampstead—beautiful, ugly flames that leap to one's throat and terrify the audience.”

“This is excellent,” Eugene continued, “a fire-eater is truly most nearly *alive*! The fire he absorbs is most readily transmuted into Motion—into Life! and therefore you will come nearer to actually *living* than anybody else I could have chosen . . . Come, Miss Fugit, you are not afraid?”

“No—I am not afraid!”

“Good! And do you feel any new sensation in your soul?”

“Yes—I feel like the Sun-King coming into his kingdom (1)—I feel warm—I feel lighter—I feel . . .

(1) This is probably the Kingdom-Come so often mentioned.—
(Note by Augustus Meddlesome, M.A.)

Oh, I feel as if some liquid, fluid, solid, ethereal, burning vapour, were slowly impregnating my body!"

Eugene Dratoff slowly lowered the tube, out of which a pungent vapour was beginning to rise, like the snowy mists that mount from the dreamy valleys whenever the flash of morn caresses them. Liquid Fire! Here were straight, curly fumes—fumes which the vulgar might call spirits—fumes which the scientist in him proclaimed to be the quintessence of rare fruits mellowed by the fantastic kiss of Heat and Motion!

She drank them avidly, with her nose, with her ears, with her very soul! And the new Life throbbed within her—the Life she had never known—the Life that was to be hers, henceforward, whenever Time and circumstances would allow!

"More, more!" she panted, "give me more! I like the smell, and the taste is divine!"

"Yes, I know it is," replied Dratoff. "My Science cannot fail! Yet another poor human is dragged upwards—heavenwards—by its might. Oh, the derision of solid matter! Now you feel your soul rising forth from your body!"

Tempus Fugit now stood up, quivering with excitement. She seemed hardly capable of remaining still, and oddly enough, her steps were uncertain. She clutched at Dratoff, lurched, and fell, while at the same time she gave vent to a weird laugh.

"Saved! Yes—I am saved! You are two men—there are two booths—everything is two! . . . Give me . . . some more . . . for to-day—for to-morrow—for always!"

"That is enough for to-day," he answered, his gaze full of the wonder of discovered worlds. "To-day you are freed from the mortal strain of matter—to-day you *live*! To-morrow, if you are again chilly and

sad, you may forget again: cold is only negative Motion—Motion is life—the Fumes are Motion—the fire-tube makes the fumes—the Liquid fills the Tube(2)—the bottle contains the Liquid—the bottle is here ! ”

And he set upon the miserable floor a bottle—a bottle which he took from the pocket of his coat—a large round bottle—a bottle on which her fervid gaze read the double word “ WHISKEY ”—though it was inscribed but once . . .

(2) Also the Straphangers.—(Note by Augustus Meddlesome, M.A.)

WILLIAM LE QUEUX

THE PURPLE PRALINE

I

“**Y**ES, it is terrible, terrible !” said my friend the Cavaliere Rabbitskini, who had hastily summoned me by telephone from my comfortable quarters in Bayswater to his own luxurious suite at the “Cecil.” I had made his acquaintance at Monte-Carlo some months previously, when I had been sent thither on an unofficial mission by one of the most powerful monarchs of Southern Europe, whom discretion forbids to name. The Cavaliere was staying at the same hotel—the best in the place, of course—and it had not taken me long to discover that he was in the diplomatic service of a Power the sovereign of which has several times been pleased to commend my modest labours. Our acquaintance had quickly blossomed into intimate friendship, and I had not been astonished at all on receiving a telephone-call from Rabbitskini, though I did not know, at the moment, that he was in London at all.

I answered the Cavaliere’s summons at once, delighted at the opportunity of seeing my old friend ;

but instead of the shining Southern eyes and black hair I was accustomed to see, there he appeared before me like a stricken man, his face careworn and wan, and with an abundant profusion of white hair upon his handsome head.

He proceeded at once to explain the trouble that was evidently distressing him.

"I am just back from Rome," he said in a hoarse whisper, "where I have been commissioned to bring over some documents of European importance to France. I need hardly say," he added, "that my mission is quite confidential, involving two of the greatest names the present times can boast of."

"I understand," I assented. For one who, like myself, has been happy in meeting most of the crowned heads of Europe, and boasts to be on terms of friendship with not a few of them, the nature of my friend's mission, was, of course, perfectly easy to grasp.

"Well," he went on, "the most important of these papers—the one which may bring a dreadful calamity on the face of international politics, has disappeared! I had it in my bag, here, with the others—now it is gone, and I am ruined! . . . My friend, if ever I have been in need of your help, it is now! Without the stolen document I am as a dead man—worse, I am dishonoured! You will not refuse your help?"

"My dear Cavaliere," I promptly replied, "my time, of which I have an abundant profusion, is at your service, and I may venture to say, I hope, that I have some experience in these matters. I remember a similar case that happened to Sir Laurence Tommyrot less than three years ago . . . But stay!" I broke out suddenly struck by a brilliant clue—"If you were on your way from Rome to France, how is it the document was stolen in London?"

"My friend, *nous autres* statesmen must be ever wary. I knew very well I was being followed and spied upon. It would have been too simple to go to Paris by the direct route: any fool could have done that . . . I came over to London, via Switzerland and Belgium, intending to then cross back to Paris."

"Yes," I muttered; "the thief, whoever he is, must be an old hand, with enough cunning to immediately grasp the intricacies of diplomatic service . . . But he has left no trace of his presence?"

"There are too many, alas!" moaned the Cavaliere, "and the most important of all is the disappearance of the document." He dropped his voice to a hoarse whisper: "Look at this," he added, and pointed to a crumpled piece of tissue paper, on which I read, after flattening it out, the letters F.O.O.L.

"This is extraordinary!" I exclaimed. "Have you seen anything of Nadejda Rubbishska lately?"

"No," answered Rabbitskini,—"but what has that to do with . . ."

"Everything, mon cher," I replied. "Nadejda has a weakness for pralines—and especially for Osborne Owen's. This slip of paper may be the clue we are looking for!"

"But you do not mean to say,"—hastily began the Cavaliere.

"I mean to say I am beginning to understand! My friend, this crumpled bit of paper was made to wrap up a little bonbon—it bears the name of the firm I mentioned—Frank Osborne Owen, London—her favourite firm! . . . What would be more natural therefore than that she should have dropped it here? If she dropped it, she must have come here! If she came, she must have taken something with her as a souvenir . . . One of your papers is missing . . . It

must be that, therefore . . . My friend, I begin to see ! Before a month has elapsed, I shall unravel this mystery ! You may count upon me ! ”

I rose and took leave of the Cavaliere Rabbitskini. As I left the luxuriously-furnished salon, I thought I heard the rippling sound of a woman's laughter.

II

Three days later, I was at Petersburg, wandering through the beautifully lit garden of the Villa Rodé. I was surrounded by the brilliant society of the Russian capital—officers in uniform, with splendid crosses on their smart tunics, women in evening dress, carrying themselves with that elastic swing which is inherent in the Slav girl, fair-haired men smiling and conversing in soft musical tones which no Englishman can ever hope to attain. The atmosphere was one of luxurious ease, and seemed ever so far away from the sordid reality which too often mars the joy of our western revelry.

I had noticed from afar the form of a tall, blonde girl with perfect, regular features, who was clad in a magnificent décolleté dress of green silk, and carrying herself with that elegance which an Englishwoman alone can call hers. I recognised her at once, and walked up to her as soon as the young captain of the guard, who was in deep conversation with her, departed towards the brilliantly-lit *buffet*.

“ What ! You here, my friend ? ” she exclaimed in a deep, melodious voice which proclaimed her to be charmingly foreign. “ I thought you were at Monte-Carlo ! ”

“ No, my dear Nadejda,” I replied, bending over her jewelled hand. “ I always leave the sunny South

at this period of the year." I tried to speak as casually as I could, but I could not help noticing the look of anxiety that passed across her face as she espied me.

Yes, she was certainly lovely, I reflected, and any man would be ready to suffer mortal agonies to call her his. Nadejda Rubbishska was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and I had met her in various capitals, where she had always been a favourite in the best society.

"Is not this garden lovely?" she said. "I think it is one of the sweetest spots in the world!"

"Especially when there is a charming young guardsman to accompany one," I supplemented, smiling.

"Ha! You have noticed I was not alone?"

"My dear Nadejda, I have travelled far and wide, and know the ways of the world. Who would think of coming alone to the Villa Rodé?"

"Well, *you* are here alone, for that matter," she rejoined, "unless . . . But no, it is impossible!"

"Quite," I replied, joining in her smile. "I came alone, as you surmise, but I have not the slightest intention of departing in the same manner. I am sure the Gospoja Nadejda Rubbishska will deign to let me see her back to her hotel."

My assurance evidently vexed her. "You are sure?" she said; "and what will Captain Swaggeroff say?"

"I care very little for what he says, I assure you. The fact is, my dear Nadejda, I have something very important to tell you—something very important."

Just at that moment, the young captain was returning, bearing a cup of iced champagne on a silver tray. "*Hotitie li Vuee . . .*"? he began. But I interrupted him at once.

"*Gospodin Kapitan*," I threw in, "I am exceedingly sorry to interrupt, but I believe I have the honour of addressing Piotr Picklovitch Swaggeroff?"

"That is my name," he replied, a trifle haughtily, "but I have not the honour of your acquaintance, *doomayoo*."

"*Nitchevo*," I smilingly assented, with an Oriental shrug. "I am the bearer of a message to you from His Imperial Majesty."

He immediately fell to attention, and saluted me in the military manner, while I took a slip of paper from my breast pocket, and handed it to him. The paper bore the Imperial seal, and no officer would dare disobey the order it contained. He turned to his companion with keen regret stamped on his youthful face.

"I am summoned to the Winter Palace at once," he said, a tremor in his voice. "How can I ask you to excuse me, Nadejda Sickovna?"

The girl had become deathly pale. "Pray do not trouble, *Gospodin Kapitan*," I reassured him; "I shall see your charming friend back." At the same time, I darted a look of intense meaning full at her eyes; she was trembling all over, but she said nothing as the captain kissed her hand and departed, saluting.

"You did well to be reasonable," I said to her as soon as we were alone once more; "if you had betrayed yourself by so much as a word, Piotr Picklovitch would have known all. Even now . . .!" My voice, though low, was full of unspoken menace, and Nadejda knew that I do not threaten in vain.

"Come, what is it you want?" she asked fiercely, her voice losing all the musical softness that gave it so much Oriental charm.

"That you shall soon learn, my dear," I replied,

"But first of all, may I offer you one of these *pralines*?"

I tendered her a jewelled box which I took from my pocket, and her pallor increased; she would have fallen, but for my protecting arm.

"What?" she gasped, "*pralines*—and an order from the Czar? Then you must know . . .!"

"I know all," I sternly replied, "and you must come with me and undo the mischief you have made. Quick, or your lover may pay the penalty!"

Unresisting, she let herself be led to the cloakroom, and we jumped into my *troika* that was waiting outside.

"To the Southern station!" I called to the *moujik*, and away clattered the horses.

Before leaving, however, I had picked up a tiny silver box which Nadejda had dropped, and no one, not even herself, had noticed the slight movement of mine.

III

The Nord-Express had just arrived at the Gare du Nord, bearing me and my unwilling companion to the French capital. Directly I was outside the station, I hailed a taxi, and was driven to my comfortable flat in the Avenue Kléber. Notwithstanding that I am keenly cosmopolitan, I usually have an apartment in most of the European capitals, which enables me to take what steps in my various important and confidential missions that I desire.

Each throb of the motor, and each tick of the taxi, was now bringing me nearer the solution of the mystery, and very soon I hoped, with an abundant profusion of certainty, to restore the stolen document

to the hands of my friend the Cavaliere Rabbitskini. My companion was still, like myself, in evening dress, for she had no luggage with her as we left the Russian capital ; here, in the sunny daylight of Paris, her low-necked gown looked oddly out of place ; yet, despite the look of abject terror in her eyes, she carried herself with that easy, elastic swing, which no other but the Slav woman can ever hope to possess.

" Here we are," I said, as the taxi stopped in front of a monumental *immeuble* near the Trocadéro. And I led her towards the lift.

I spoke a few words in French to my valet, on entering the flat, and conducted Nadejda Rubbishska to my study. As soon as the *café-au-lait* and *croissants* had been brought in, I turned to her again, a smile of contentment on my hitherto anxious face.

" Are you not afraid," I asked, " to drink coffee with me ? "

" Why should I be ? " she replied, defiance leaping to her bloodless lips.

" Because," I very slowly made answer, " it would be terribly easy for me to slip in a few drops of cyanhydric acid."

She started up in terror. " Spare me ! " she exclaimed. " Oh ! I am only a poor, defenceless girl. and you cannot, surely, use your man's strength against . . . "

" Against your womanish wits ! " I supplemented " No, Nadejda, I shall not use my man's strength, because, at last, I have a proof against you — a material *pièce à conviction* ! "

And I took out of my waistcoat pocket the tiny silver box which she had dropped as we left the Villa Rodé.

" You fiend ! " she hissed, clenching her small

fists. If hate could kill, I would have been a dead man then.

"It is no use resisting, Nadejda," I calmly proceeded, "the game is up. My friend, Roger Foulcan, the *Chef de la Sûreté*, is waiting for you outside, and I shall hand you over to him . . . unless——"

"Unless?" she echoed, breathless.

"Unless you restore to the Cavaliere Rabbitskini the paper you so cleverly stole from his room in London, ten days ago!"

"And if I refuse?" she enquired, a shade of defiance still throbbing in her voice.

"If you refuse, you will immediately be arrested by the Paris police, and," I harshly added, "*Piotr Picklovitch will eat your purple praline!*"

The last words produced the effect I had hoped for. "It is well," she said, "I will give you back the document."

She appeared submissive enough, now the fight turned against her. I rang the bell, and spoke a few words to my man, whereupon my friend the Cavaliere was shown into the room.

"I am glad to see you again, *amico mio*," he exclaimed, pressing my hand, "and with the *Signorina*, too?" he continued, his voice full of a questioning tone.

"The Signorina will be charming enough to give you back your strayed paper, my dear Cavaliere—*n'est-ce pas*, Nadejda?" I replied.

The girl, with that feline grace which Southern women alone possess, extracted a folded note from her bosom, and tendered it to the Cavaliere, who took it eagerly from her outstretched fingers.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "that is the very paper! I am saved, thank God! . . . And Europe is spared a

catastrophe! . . . Ah, my friend, how can I ever thank you?" He came towards me with tears of joy in his eyes, and I understood his delight as he took both my hands in his.

"But how have you been able to restore the lost document?" he enquired, amazement getting the better of his joy.

"It has been a difficult mystery to solve," I replied, "but I set my wits to it as never before, and the result has not been lacking. When I was in your rooms at the 'Cecil,'" I began my explanation, "I was able to at once notice a slip of crumpled paper, from which it was child's play to deduce the truth: that Nadejda Rubbishska—or I should say Sally Sloper, for that is her real name—was the thief. The difficulty was not to trace her, either, as I knew she was due at Petersburg very shortly, on a confidential mission for a monarch I cannot name at present; no, the difficulty was to secure a hold upon her—to find some way of forcing her, without scandal, to restore what she had stolen . . . That is where I had to cudgel my brains! But ere long I found a way . . ."

"Serpent!" hissed the girl, hardly able to control her rage, though endowed with that elastic carriage which is inherent in the woman from the North. But I went on, heedless of the interruption.

"I knew she had a passion for *pralines*, and I also remembered several cases of mysterious deaths that have never been solved—poor Count Rotteno, less than a year ago, for instance—and others. There *must* be some link, I thought, between these . . ."

"What!" exclaimed the Cavaliere, "you think . . ."

"Listen, my friend! *Pralines* are roasted almonds, and Osborne Owen's, Nadejda's favourite ones, are

remarkable for their bitterness. Now, bitter almonds contain a certain quantity of cyanhydric acid, one of the deadliest known poisons . . . Do you begin to see? . . . Nadejda was a great consumer of Osborne Owen's *pralines*—but not for herself! By distilling the almonds she could, without exciting suspicion, procure sufficient doses of the terrible poison, which she kept in a tiny silver box, and gave her victims to absorb in a purple sweet."

"This is marvellous!" said Rabbitskini. "But how were you able to get a hold upon her?"

"*L'éternel masculin*," I replied, smiling. "It was easy for me to learn that she was engaged to a young captain of the Russian Guard. Moreover, I have been happy enough of late, to do his Imperial Majesty some little services which he was glad to commend, and to reciprocate when I made bold to ask. At the Villa Rodé, where I saw Nadejda and her lover, I noticed that he had taken a *praline* out of a box she had handed to him: I was not slow to at once seize upon the opportunity, for I noticed the sweet was a purple one! If she refused to follow me, I would expose her to her lover, who would eat the *praline* as a test—and then . . . ! I had her in my hands now! Nadejda was at her wits' end, and as a last resource, tried to drop her dangerous silver box; I picked it up unnoticed, however, and——"

A loud shriek interrupted me. We both turned round hastily . . . Nadejda Rubbishska was lying prone on the floor, a purple *praline* between her teeth, a look of defiance still upon her ghastly face . . .

It was a Friday, and I have good reason to remember the day on which at last was solved the mystery of the *Purple Praline*.

CHARLES GARVICE

THE POWER OF LOVE

I

HAROLD MAYFORD was walking moodily along Piccadilly, his back turned upon the busy heart of London.

Things had decidedly been against him of late—and just when Fate ought to have stood by him, as he told himself that the chances that the life that he was leading would come to an end were rapidly increasing. The hope which he had thought he had a right to entertain seemed foolish in the face of his present condition, and there were less opportunities than ever of his retrieving his fortunes. Only a week ago, he was the happiest man alive, and now——!

Harold was the head clerk in the office of Walker and Stalker, the influential and fashionable solicitors; he was not as old as most of the young clerks one may meet in most of the similar firms, but though he numbered less years than many, his learning and experience qualified him very well for the high position that was his. He had been used to clean living and hard work, having spent his childhood in Devonshire,

where, as a bairn, he used to play to his heart's content with the other boys and colleens, and spend less hours than he ought to have done at the dame's school that was an establishment that professd to teach almost everything. The days passed by, and he became a bronzed-cheeked youth, used to being starved with the cold or numbed from doing without tea ; he was sent to a public school, which turned him out as quite a fine young man, healthy in body, soul, and intellect, with a strapping constitution and the desire to get on. He had easily found a situation in the city, and by dint of hard work and thorough conscientiousness, had been promoted before he was thirty to the unusually high position he now occupied for a man of his age.

Indeed, everything had gone very well—not as well, of course, as they might have done in a leaf drawn from the Golden Age, but still most satisfactorily. A month ago, too, he had been introduced to Mamie Fullerton at a ball that old Mrs. Somerset had thought that she was obliged to give every year. Harold, with that perfect ease that obtains in the West-end drawing-rooms, had spent a heavenly evening, though he had not imagined that the pleasure that he felt that the young girl had given him was anything stronger than an ordinary sensation of sympathy which he had felt almost certain he had experienced many a time before. Since then, he had had less chances than ever of forgetting Mamie, whom he had met several times, either in town or at her father's country-house, where he had been invited several times, and had had ample opportunity to feel that he was welcome.

Then, suddenly, yesterday, the crash had come. An important document involving great losses in the

famous Stuart-Melville case, had disappeared from Walker and Stalker's, and he, as head clerk, was, of course, responsible for the loss. Not only was he completely beggared by this stroke of ill-luck, but even his reputation, which he had thought he had maintained above suspicion, was tarnished thereby: it was darkly hinted that he had purposely mislaid the valuable deed, and all sorts of dark and dastardly motives were ascribed to such an act of secret cunning. His employers had not mentioned it, naturally, but the sneer that he had thought that he had seen on Mr. Walker's usually benignant face, and the frown on Mr. Stalker's, had been sufficient to show him how things were being taken in *that* quarter. If the deed was not found within two days, he must resign, he felt—he could not face a dismissal. And that meant losing Mamie, anyway . . . Yes, things were indeed black against him.

In his disconsolate walk, he suddenly bumped into a passer-by.

"What the deuce——!" began the victim, and suddenly changed his tone: "Why, if it isn't Mayford! How are you, old man?"

The speaker, whose name was Cuthbert Harrison, was a former clerk of Walker and Stalker's, a handsome youth who was making a name for himself as a stock-broker.

"Oh! Harrison!" replied Harold, absently, "very glad to meet you, I'm sure."

"What's the matter, old chap? You look rather downhearted! . . . If I didn't know you to be perfectly virtuous, I might believe you've been betting rather heavily, and running into debt. . . But I know very well it can't be that . . ."

"No, it isn't," snapped Harold. He had never

had a liking for Harrison, and he thought he detected something in the nature of a sneer in his too friendly talk.

"No offence meant, my dear fellow . . . I didn't imagine you were so touchy! By the way, are you going to the Fullerton's this evening?"

"No, I don't think I am . . . The fact is, I am not feeling rather well to-day."

"Mean to turn in early? Quite the best thing, too . . . well, good-bye."

He held out his hand to Harold, who shook it silently; but he could not help thinking that the face that was behind the hand that was being held out to him was not a frank, open face that one delights in meeting. And the thought that Harrison would go to the Fullertons' that very evening, and see Mamie, while *he* would sit up restlessly in his chambers in Baker Street, was a torture to his honest soul.

Cuthbert Harrison continued his walk at a brisk pace, and Harold was still wondering at the sarcastic tone he had used towards him, when he suddenly became aware of a shabby-looking man who approached him from the other side of the street.

"Excuse me, sir," muttered the man, coming up to him, "I just noticed as you was talking to Mr. 'Arrison."

"Yes—well, what about it?" enquired Harold.

"You see, sir, Mr. 'Arrison and I don't pick off very well together, and I thought perhaps as I saw you talking with him, as you might sort of give me his address—that is, if you've no objection, of course, sir."

"Really, I don't know whether I should be justified. . . ." Harold began. But the shabby man interrupted him at once.

"Of course, if 'e's a special friend o' yours, there's no more to be said. But I should advise you to choose your friends a bit better, that's all. A low-down, lying skunk—that's what Mr. 'Arrison is at 'eart—and I've got good proof of it, too!"

"Look here, my man," said Harold, "I don't want to listen to your wild talk." He sincerely hoped the man would leave him alone, yet he was oddly fascinated by what he had said: these revelations of Cuthbert Harrison's true character hardly came as a surprise to him, for he was a good judge of men.

"I think you had better leave me," he went on.

"Not yet," said the shabby man. "I've got the thin end of a wedge in Mr. 'Arrison's side—and I want to get even with 'im for the wrong 'e's done me! I got three years hard for a forgery *he* was the actual author of—and now I've got information about the Stuart-Melville deed . . ."

Harold sprang up at the name.

"What has Mr. Harrison to do with the Stuart-Melville case?"

"Ah! That's just his little game! He knows that nobody knows that I know anything about it; but, for once, he's wrong!"

"Look here," exclaimed Harold in a terse whisper, "I don't want to know anything about Mr. Harrison, but any information you can give me about the Stuart-Melville deed I am most anxious to hear, and shall readily pay for. Come! Name your price!"

"Not 'ere, sir—not 'ere in the street."

"Well, then, come with me to my place—quick!"

He hailed a taxi, and the two men were soon seated in Mayford's comfortable chambers. The interview did not last many minutes, but it was quite long

enough to melt Harold's moodiness and to give him back the buoyancy he had lost but so short a while ago.

II

Cuthbert Harrison was a frequent visitor at the Fullerton's, and his handsome figure and smart clothes made him a favourite in society. The dinner, to-night, in their large house in Pont Street, was quite a social function, and Lady Fullerton was rather proud of her guests. The fact that Harold Mayford failed to put in an appearance passed without comment, and even without notice, though Mamie looked rather anxiously at each new guest before Harrison finally took her in to dinner. He was in high spirits, and did not mean to let the shadow of an anxiety trouble his fair companion.

"I am really glad they have given me a seat next to you," he said to her with a pleasant smile; "fancy me sitting between old Lady Podger and Miss Tomkins, for instance!"

"Why, they are both very nice, I'm sure," replied Mamie.

"Like most of the 'very nice' people one meets," he retorted, "the farther the nicer."

He did not allow the conversation to flag for an instant, and she responded readily to his efforts. Mamie was quite a pretty girl with blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair that she had done up in a charmingly girlish and becoming manner; and her simple dress was as graceful as any elaborate creation of fashion.

After some desultory talk, the topics of the day were mentioned, and Lady Podger put in a word about the Stuart-Melville case.

"It is most remarkable, really," she said. "My brother told me to-day everything depends upon the production of an old deed, and I tell myself that the chances are that the document that is the key that is missing will never be found at all."

"Have you any private information?" enquired Sir Morton Fullerton, with a note of amused scepticism in his voice.

"I don't think anybody has the least knowledge about it at all," put in Harrison.

"I shouldn't be so sure, young man," retorted Lady Podger. "I heard something about a discharged clerk and a stolen copy of the deed—and it is difficult not to feel interested in such a mystery."

There was nothing very remarkable in this piece of information, as the old lady always "heard something" about everything, and it was generally proved that her knowledge was quite imaginary—a mere bubble bursting in the rapid flow of smart conversation. Yet Cuthbert seemed struck with the remark, and something of his high spirits froze in the warm atmosphere of the dinner-table, as the repast drew to its end.

While the ladies were retiring to the drawing-room, one of the maids, whose name was Jane, came up to her, and murmured something in her ear.

"For me?" answered the girl, "you are sure he asked for me?"

"Yes, miss, I'm quite sure," she insisted, "and he says as he's got to see you on hurgent business—about Mr. Mayford, miss."

Mamie's heart gave a jump; she had not expected to hear that name now—and in such queer circumstances.

"It isn't Mr. Mayford himself, by any chance?" she asked.

"Lor! No, miss," replied Jane. "I know Mr. Mayford well enough, I assure you, to be able to distinguish him from the shabby man as is waiting houtside in the conservatory, miss."

"Very well," said Mamie, "I shall go and see what he wants."

She followed the maid to the conservatory, where a shabbily-dressed man was waiting, hat in hand. He advanced towards her with a respectful look in his eyes.

"Good evening, miss. Please excuse my disturbing you at this time of the day, but I have important news to communicate to you."

"What is it? Quick! I can't spare you more than a moment," she exclaimed.

"I shan't detain you long, miss. I only want to give you this." And he took a large envelope out of his shabby coat, which he handed to the astonished girl. "There's nothing to hurt you, miss, on the contrary—I shouldn't dream of hurting *you*," he went on. "You see, if you give that envelope to Mr. Mayford, you'll make him the happiest man alive."

"Do you really think so?" she asked, sweetly blushing.

"Yes, it's . . . it's a paper he most anxiously needs."

"Very well," said Mamie, "I believe you. I shall say I have got a headache, and take it to his place at once." She spoke the words with a note of defiance, that showed that the flutter that her heart was in was not the kind that leave their friends in the lurch. Less girls than one thinks, perhaps, would have acted similarly; but Mamie was staunch in her friendship—or was it already love?

"I think Mr. Mayford will come here to-night,"

replied the stranger—"at least, he told me he intended doing so. Good-bye, Miss, and thank you."

He went out as quietly as he had come in, and left her in a gentle flutter of anticipation.

As she retraced her steps towards the drawing-room, she saw Harold coming into the hall. A rosy blush spread over her delicate cheeks as he came towards her.

"Mamie!" he exclaimed softly. And she did not resent the familiar use he made of her Christian name—the name that she knew that he knew that he liked. Her answer came deep from the bottom of her heart, before even she had time to think of what she was going to say.

"Harold!" she murmured very sweetly, "why didn't you come to dinner?"

"Because I was a fool," he replied; "I thought—I—I could never come again . . ."

"You silly boy!" she cried; and there was pure joy in her voice. "Who told you that? Mr. Harrison?"

He attempted to answer; but the harder he tried, the less words he was able to utter. Love, especially such love as his, bound him dumb in the face of his happiness.

"By the way," she went on, "I have something for you—something very important." And she gave him the envelope that she knew that the shabby man wanted her to deliver into his hands. The hope which he had felt he had renewed came flooding his overfull heart.

"The deed!" he exclaimed, "the Stuart-Melville deed! Mamie, I am saved! I owe you more than my happiness! You give me back my honour!"

The next moment she was in his arms, and they

were in rapture like two children. He looked deeply into the eyes of the woman he loved, and beheld binding faith and everlasting love.

"Dearest," he said, "I know all—and all is well. Harrison thought he would rob me of everything I had—my situation, my good name, my honour—and my love; but, by a happy chance, you have given me back everything—I owe all to you!"

"To me?" she exclaimed in grave astonishment.

"Yes," he replied. "The man who gave you this envelope—and gave me the knowledge of Cuthbert Harrison's guilt—acted solely for you: he was a crossing-sweep in former days, and you gave him sixpence on a frosty day. He has never forgotten it, and his devotion is the fruit of your sweet charity!"

When they entered the drawing-room together, Harrison was gone, nor was he ever heard of again.

THE END.



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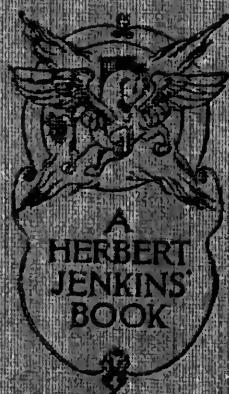
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